241 463 much of the land is useless. Again, a farm small in area might be exclusively devoted to the sort of economy which is usually found on very large farms. In any single case, statistical generalities do not hold, of course. But in the large kind of correlation which a count of varying factors affords, bulk correspondences turn up with complete regularity.

241 463 162 The course by which this conclusion is reached takes one through the devious labyrinth of Free State Government statistical abstracts. In 1926, the last census year before the authors' field work was undertaken, the numbers living in country districts, "outside villages and towns with 200 or more population," made up 63 per cent of the Free State's population of almost 3,000,000. They were 1,815,496. Of the 1,307,662 classed as "occupied persons 12 years of age and over" for the whole Free State, 672,129, or 51 per cent, were engaged in agriculture. Any attempt, then, to understand the human setting of Irish farming involves an inquiry into the forces motivating the lives of well over half the country's people.

241 433 In 1926 this agricultural population produced a total output valued at £64,757,000. Industry in Ireland produced goods to the value of only a little over half that figure (£34,000,000 net output).

● 231 433 In the agricultural output of that year, the proportions of the various products indicate the character of the agriculture. Foodstuffs, with livestock products among them, made up the bulk of the output. Milk products accounted for £13,600,000; cattle, exported alive or slaughtered within the country, accounted for another £13,800,000. Pigs and eggs made up £9,800,000 and £6,690,000 respectively. Other livestock such as poultry, sheep, and horses accounted for the rest, in that order of importance. Wool and sundry items such as honey brought in a mere £700,000. All of these, the total output of livestock, reached a value of

231 433

£50,555,000. The figures illustrate the preponderant importance of livestock and particularly cattle and pigs in Irish economy.

241 433

The remaining £14,000,000 was made up of crops and turf, the latter alone accounting for £5,938,000. Among the crops, potatoes came first, with a value for the year of £3,786,000. Oats, cabbage, and barley accounted for about £900,000 each; and there were a few other items of smaller values, the largest of which was fruit at £466,000.

These figures of the agricultural products rather underestimate the amount of tillage products raised. In the words of the Census Report, they "do not include any part of the produce which was used for further agricultural production in the Saorstat whether that part was used on the farm on which produced or sold by one farmer to another — e.g. milk fed to calves, potatoes fed to pigs, hay, turnips, mangels fed to cattle, corn used for seed, horses used for farm work."[1]

231 241 311 471

Within this generality of the monetary value of the goods produced, one can begin to take account of the wide difference of the sizes of the holdings engaged in this agricultural production. A glance at the figure illustrating this kind of economy by relative size of acreage (Fig. 1) will bring the matter out.

The agricultural community carried on this production upon farms of very widely different character. Holdings range in size from one acre or less to 500 or more. Those under 30 acres comprise 23 per cent of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Saorstat, those of 30–50, 17 per cent; those of 50–100, 24 per cent; and those of 100–200, 19 per cent. Farms larger than 200 acres cover only 16 per cent of agricultural land.

In general, the smaller ones practice the more generalized economy, their production being markedly different from

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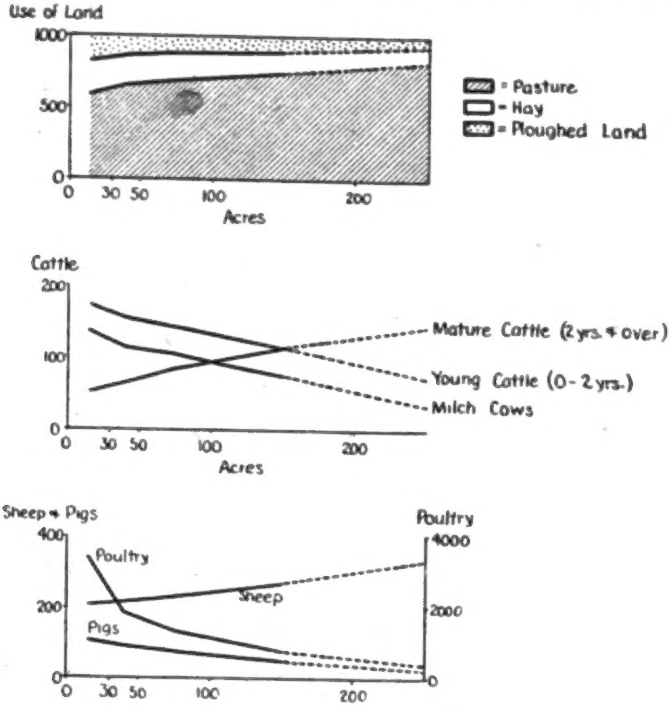
[1] *Agricultural Output of Saorstat Eireann, 1926–27* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. 5.

231 241 311 471

that of the large farms. The latter, especially in the midland counties, where they are most numerous, raise little more than beef cattle. Their owners are the graziers or "ranchers" of current political controversy in Ireland. The different economies express themselves in the census as follows:

FIGURE 1

PRODUCTION ON LARGE AND SMALL HOLDINGS, ALL IRELAND, 1926 CENSUS



(date 1926)

The numbers of acres ploughed and the numbers under hay per 1000 acres of agricultural land decrease continuously as the size of the holdings increases; the numbers of milch cows, of

young cattle, of pigs, and of poultry also decrease but the num- 231
ber of dry older cattle and of sheep per 1000 acres increase as 241
the size of the holdings increases. The contrast between the 311
smallest and the largest holdings is exceedingly great and is 471
very great even between the second smallest and second largest. Contrasting the holdings 30–50 acres with holdings 100–200 acres the table shows that on equal areas of agricultural land, the smaller holdings have 32% more ploughed land, 29% more hay, 54% more milch cows, 53% more cattle under one year, 16% more cattle one to two years old, and 9% more cattle of all kinds, 80% more pigs, and 139% more poultry than the holdings 100–200 acres, but the latter have 24% more sheep, 52% more dry cattle, 2 to 3 years old, and 209% more dry cattle 3 years old or over than do holdings 30–50 acres.[2]

In County Clare, the area of our investigation, agricul- 231
ture presents much the same character and the same differ- 241
ence between small and large farmers as does the whole 311
of Ireland. Clare occupies a middle place among the counties; neither the large nor the small farm predominates. Almost always the small farmer has a garden in potatoes and cabbage with a few oats and turnips and perhaps some rye. The rest of his land will be under several meadows in hay, grazed during the winter months and in fields (pasture land) grazed during both summer and winter, if sheltered. In rough mountain areas sheep are common, particularly in the Broadford and Tubber districts. In addition to cattle, the smaller holder generally has a large flock of ducks, geese, and hens, and he keeps several pigs. These are also fed upon the oats, potatoes, cabbage, and milk left over after the other livestock have been fed. Specialization in poultry raising is still rare, though poultry stations are being established here and there under the supervision of agents of the Department of Agriculture. Certain areas, of course, show minor specializations, such as Miltown Malbay, a seacoast region known for its cabbage, and Newquay, known

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[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, Report and Tables* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. xxi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

231

241 for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted
311 to one crop.

234 With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

234 246 The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

233 [244] The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

These figures coupled with those giving the number of livestock in the county at that date illustrate the greatly preponderant interest in animal products, particularly cattle, pigs, and eggs. The figures for cattle show that Clare is not primarily a ranching county, but that there is, nevertheless, a respectable number of dry, store cattle. In June 1932 there were 786 bulls, 60,149 milch cows, and 1,696 heifers in calf; and besides such breeding stock there were 5,780 dry three-year-olds or over, 23,266 two-year-olds, and 47,918 yearlings. There were also 58,708 under a year old. 231

Returning again to the conditions for all Ireland, it will be seen in how many respects Clare duplicates the various types of agriculture for all Ireland. The Report of Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, describes statistically the difference in farming between large and small holders over the whole country. It finds that for the whole country

> milch cows were densest (in 1926) in the Southwestern Counties [Clare is one], a region of medium sized holdings, next densest in the Northwest with its numerous small holdings and least dense in the Central Eastern Counties. . . . the 13 latter counties included 11 of the counties of the largest percentage of land under holdings of 200 acres or over, 11 of the 13 densest in dry cattle 3 years or over, 10 of the 13 densest in dry cattle 2 to 3 years old and 10 of the 13 densest in sheep. . . . the counties densest in the older dry cattle coincide closely with these densest in large holdings.[5]

Of tillage the Report states that 241

> small farmers adopt a crop rotation very different to that of the large farmers, putting much more of their ploughed land under roots and green crops and much less under corn. . . . Farmers with 1 to 30 acres devote to potatoes nearly three times as large a proportion of their ploughed land as farmers with over 200 acres, and the latter put twice as much . . . under barley and under turnips as the small farmer and a much larger proportion under oats and mangels.

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[5] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xxiii.

241 As regards the smaller crops "the small farmers show a distinct preference for cabbage and rye. . . ."[6]

"Poultry are influenced more than any other class of livestock by size of the farm. . . . They are nine times as dense on holdings of 1 to 30 acres as on holdings over 200 acres. . . . counties densest in poultry coincide with the counties densest in small holdings. . . ."[7]

● 231 Pigs, however, "seem to be influenced more by densities of tillage and of milch cows than by size of holdings. . . . The Southwestern Counties [Clare is one of them] have dense pig herds and the largest bacon factories."[8]

241 407 The difference reflects itself likewise in the distribution of agricultural implements and machinery over the two types of farm. The figures, dating from 1917,[9] are two decades old, but, in spite of the subsequent increase in mechanization, Irish farming is little given to abundant use of machines, and proportions hold much as at that time. In the words of the Report in discussing the tables it presents, giving numbers of farm implements and machines, enumerating ploughs, harrows, turnip and mangel sowers, corn binders, mowers and reapers, horse-drawn hayforks, and potato diggers per thousand acres of ploughed land or specific crop, on various sized holdings:

> The figures rise regularly to a maximum (in the column representing holdings of 50 to 100 acres) and then fall away regularly. Small figures for the small holdings presumably mean that the less efficient implements are used, (the spade in place of the plough, the scythe instead of the mower), not that cooperation . . . exists to any appreciable extent.[10]

That large holders do not proportionately increase their use of such implements and machines after the 50 to 100 acre maximum is reached lies in the fact that "the small

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[6] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1936*, pp. xxvi, xxvii.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*, p. lv.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. lvi. We shall see that this statement is not entirely accurate, though there is no large-scale village coöperation as in Balkan and Slavic lands.

241 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small
262 farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin,
511 Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself
231 again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the
241 roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate
439 market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant.
438 It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the majority of the calves in the seven southwestern counties are born in March. A large majority of the calves in the eastern part of the country, the thirteen central eastern counties, are born in April, and a majority of the calves born in the northern tier of counties in the area of the Free State, a region we shall call the six northwestern counties, are born in May. This sort of progression of the birth dates of cattle through the spring months is, of course, related to climatic conditions. 231

Because such a progression exists, an annual count of cattle taken on the basis of age, undertaken each June first, the beginning of the butter export season, when cows are in full milk, would lead to the strong presumption that cattle recorded as under one year of age at that date would, in fact, nearly all be under three months of age; yearlings so recorded would, in fact, be under fifteen months, and so on. When an actual count was taken in 1926 of the cattle in Ireland, this presumption was borne out. On it is based the following picture of internal cattle trade to be derived from the Report on Agricultural Statistics already quoted.

Following the reasoning of the Report we learn that since "exceedingly few calves are either exported from or slaughtered in the Saorstat and . . . on June 1st, 1926, there were 78 cattle under one year per 100 milch cows, it follows that any district or group of holdings . . . with much less than 78 must have exported them."[21] Then, transferring this device to the annual count of cattle by age, it becomes readily apparent that all of the central eastern counties who count many over 78 cattle under one year of age per 100 milch cows on June first 1926 must have been importing, while the northern counties, Donegal and Leitrim, and the southern counties, Cork, Kerry, and Limerick, with figures much less than 78, must have been exporting. The last three 231 438

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[21] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xvi.

231 438 counties named are the principal members of the group of seven southwestern dairying counties.

A great cattle trade thus takes place between the southwestern dairying area and the "ranching" counties of the central eastern area. When yearlings are taken into account by the same statistics, a fuller picture of this trade emerges. All but one of the central eastern counties has considerably more than 100 yearlings for every 100 calves under a year old, showing that the area is continuing to import the cattle as they grow older. The other sections of the country have considerably fewer than 100 yearlings for every 100 younger cattle, and have been continuing their exports. The principal dairying counties again have the fewest yearlings and are again the leaders in export.

Likewise in counting two-year-olds, the same proportions hold, and in counting cattle over three years old they hold again. In the last two cases, however, northern counties show a greater export than do the dairying counties of the southwest, the latter presumably having got rid of a larger proportion of all cattle not designed for milk production at an earlier age.

[439] The importing central eastern counties are devoted largely to raising and fattening dry store cattle for the British market. And since this is the case, it can be seen that the statistics given above reflect a continuous movement of cattle, calves, yearlings, and two-year-olds to the rich grazing lands of the central plain. Yet to regard this trade as exclusively geographical would be misleading and obscuring, for the profound differences between small and large holders which we have been examining are involved here as well.

Further statistical inquiry demonstrates that the trade takes place as much between the different sized farms as between the regions of different soil and climate. If we correlate proportions of cattle of various ages with the size of the holdings in the various county groups we have already named, rather than with the counties as a whole, this great internal cattle trade takes on the new aspect we mention. For example, figures for calves under one year reach 78 and over per 100 milch cows on holdings of all sizes in the thirteen central eastern counties, holdings of all sizes above 30 acres (the average size) in the northern counties, but only on holdings above 100 acres in the calf-producing dairying southwestern counties. That means that, though holdings of all sizes are importing calves in the "ranching" areas, in the other areas only large farms are importing them.

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Taking yearlings next, figures on the table showing more than 100 yearlings per 100 calves under one year old appear on all holdings in the thirteen county midland areas except on the very smallest farms, but in the northern and southwestern areas such figures appear only on the very largest holdings. The midlands import yearlings, particularly in the large farms, and in the rest of the country large farms do likewise, but small farmers get rid of them. Thus in the southwestern counties, holders of 200 acres and over, with a count of 118 yearlings per 100 calves, are importers of cattle produced on other farms, as are holders of 100 acres and over in the northern counties, where the counts of yearlings are 132 for the 100–200 acre group and 154 for the 200 and over group. But small farmers in all counties, regardless of the section of the country in which they live, are exporters, not only in dairying Kerry but even in the flatlands of Meath.

Taking a similar count of dry two-year-old cattle, we find that all small holdings in all areas are still exporting, though the size of holding at which exporting ceases is lower in the central eastern area (the 50–100 acre group), and all large holdings in all areas are still importing, though, conversely, the size of holding at which importing begins is higher in the dairying county region.

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For a graphic representation of this argument and its conclusions, let the reader turn to Figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 gives the numbers for various kinds of cattle by various size holdings separated out for the three groups of counties.[22] It shows the characteristic increase of the numbers of store or dry cattle, for export upon holdings as one goes from small to large and from the northern and southern areas of intensive small farm production of different kinds, based upon different soil and climate, to the rich grazing country of the central plain. It shows that one is really dealing with two kinds of increase of holding of dry cattle; the first, the difference of area, and the second, the difference of size of holding. The last seems to be the more important since it has a characteristic influence in each of the areas.

Figure 7 completes the picture. In *A* one sees the characteristic relative absence of milch cows upon large holdings. In *B* one sees that calf production is fairly uniform everywhere. In *C*, however, one begins to see the movement of cattle from small farm to large as the calves grow older. Small holdings have dropped out as possessors of older dry cattle, and through *D* and *E* continue to do so. As the dry cattle mature they become more and more concentrated upon the large holdings. The figure demonstrates at a glance that it is not a geographical trade that is involved so much as it is a trade between the two kinds of economy, between the two rural classes in the Free State.

Numerical statement of the movement of cattle thus shows us that the internal cattle trade in Ireland is in reality a trade between two types of farmers. It reflects again the great difference in the economies of large farmer and small, and shows that this difference extends to their participation in the business, commerce, and export trade of the country. The large farmers are directly concerned with preparation

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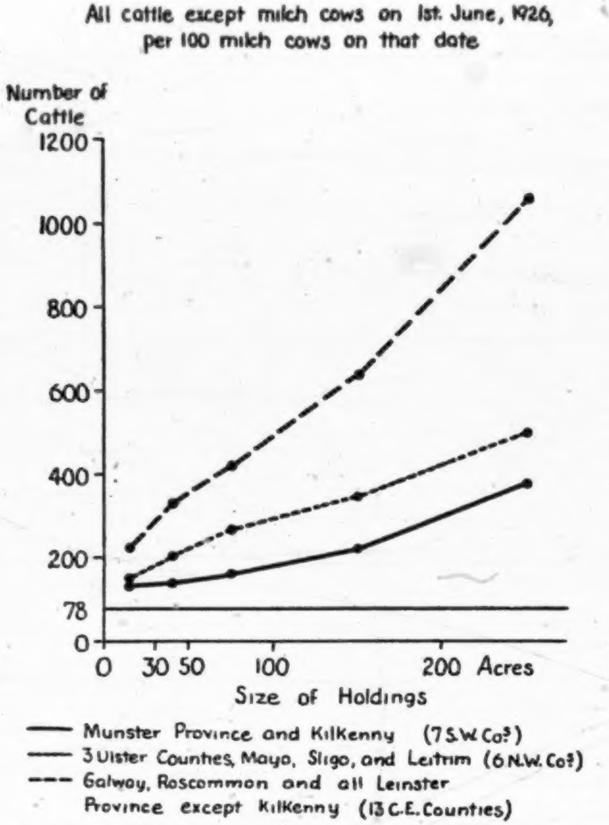
[22] The figures are based on tables given in *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, pp. xvii, xix.

FIGURE 6

PROPORTIONS OF STORE CATTLE TO MILCH CATTLE ON VARIOUS SIZE HOLDINGS IN THE AREAS OF DISTINCTIVE ECONOMY IN THE IRISH FREE STATE



The three areas are those of distinctive climatic and soil conditions. The northern and southern areas are alike in being suppliers of young cattle, the central area in retaining herds of dry cattle. Yet one can see at a glance that the difference among the broad areas reflects real differences in cattle-holding on small and large acreages. Points on the graph express for each size holding the number of non-milk-producing cattle per 100 cattle. The number of non-milk-producing cattle then ranges from a proportion of 78 to 100, to over 1,000 to 100.

[p.27]

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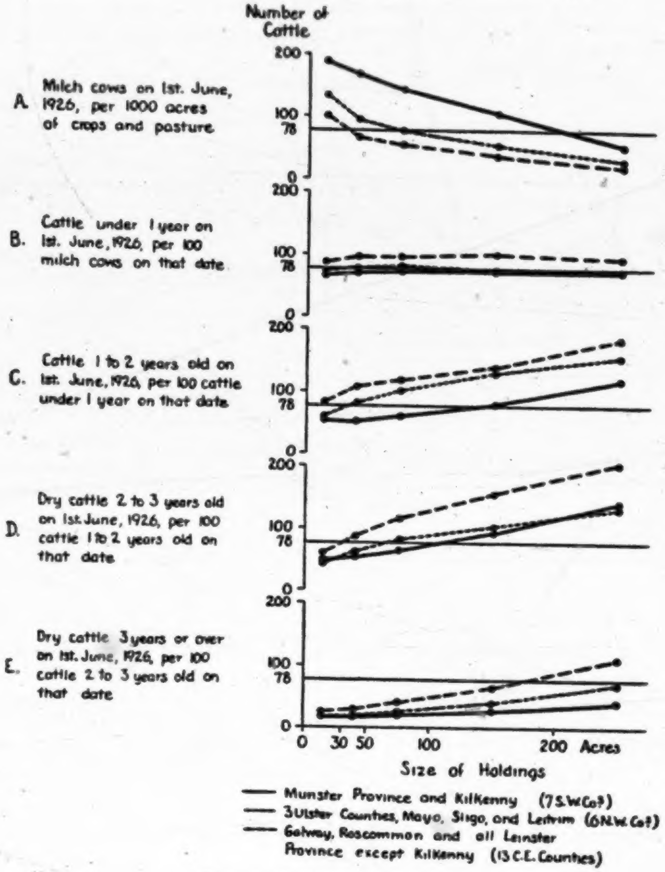
FIGURE 7

CATTLE TRADE BETWEEN CLASSES OF IRISH FARMERS, 1926



For explanation see the text.

[p. 28]

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of cattle for direct shipment to the English market; the small farmers are concerned only remotely, for the large farmer himself is their immediate market. They deal in much younger cattle and prepare them for sale to the middlemen and the big farmers.

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Consequently, the small farmers are much less immediately affected by disturbances in the cattle trade with Great Britain. The fact has been evident throughout the years of the De Valera regime. It has blasted the prognostications of those who argued that a restriction and interruption of the trade with England, such as grew up in the "economic war" which followed De Valera's retention of the land annuity payments and the English retaliation in the form of import duties on cattle, would alienate the farmers' support of De Valera's government. It certainly alienated the large farmers, who were immediately affected, but the "farmer" of the politician is not always the whole population of that name. It left the small farmer relatively undisturbed. He was at one or two points removed from the actual trade with England and saw it only as a sale to big farmers. With the small farmers, the economic argument of De Valera's opponents failed.

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However this may be, the conclusions as to the great division among farmers that statistics and the cattle trade have yielded us are borne out equally well within the separate counties. County Clare, for instance, shares fully in the internal cattle trade. And in Clare, the trade flows from small farmers to large. There are no statistics on the matter, but the generalities hold. Clare occupies a middle place within the system of exchanges. It is one of the seven southwestern dairying counties we have dealt with. But it does not always follow them statistically. As we have seen, Clare is a county of mixed holdings. Both the midland type of big farmer and the small farmer of the west and south are present. The cattle trade within Clare is a miniature of

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that of Ireland. Clare buys in as many cattle in certain sections as it exports in others. Those who do the bulk of the buying are big farmers from the flatlands along the Fergus estuary or the hills of Burren. The small farmers of the remaining sections do the selling.

All this tedious statistical inquiry has not been without its purpose. It has established for us through the medium of economic inquiry the existence of two distinct kinds of orientation and adaptation to the soil and two kinds of agricultural activity. In doing so, in marking the first distinctions and differences to be observed among the dwellers of the countryside and showing us something of the relations between them, it has introduced us to the first great group with which we must deal: the small farmers.

CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings 361 or plots of land from which they make the livelihood 592 we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields.

The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work 592 within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place.

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into 231 ● "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according 241 to its character and agricultural use. These divisions 311 make up the holding and represent the productive

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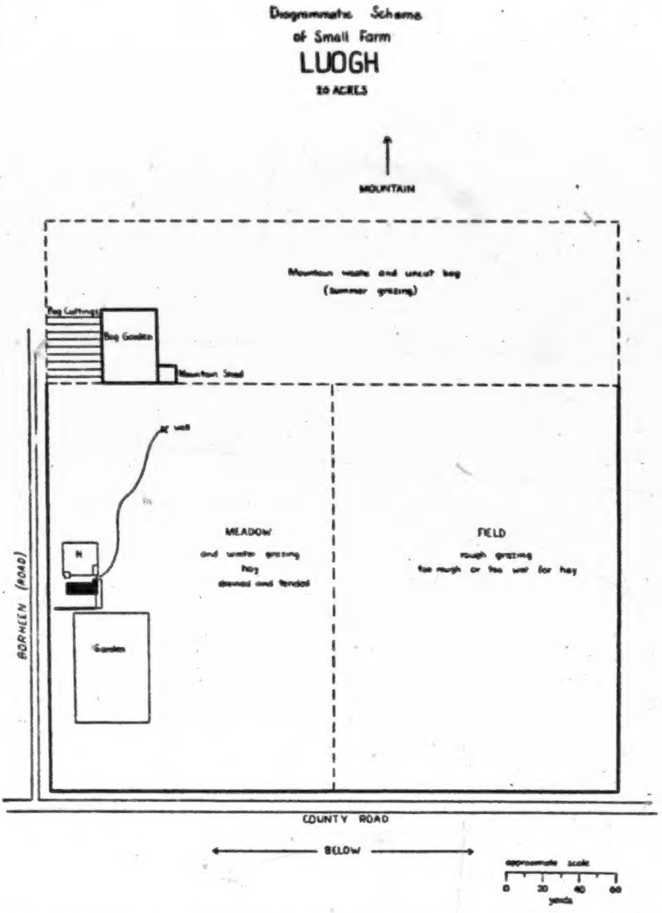
FIGURE 8


Diagrammatic Schema
of Small Farm
LUOGH
20 ACRES
MOUNTAIN
Mountain waste and uncut bog
(summer grazing)
Bog Cuttings
Bog Garden
Mountain Shed
well
H
Garden
MEADOW
and winter grazing
hay
drained and fenced
FIELD
rough grazing
too rough or too wet for hay
BORHEEN (ROAD)
COUNTY ROAD
BELOW
approximate scale
0
20
40
60
yards

Schematic representation (not to scale) of composite Clare farm of about five to fifty acres.

activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated 231
are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops 241
for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and 311
rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are 231
the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various 343
sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the
house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, 351
carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called 231
"all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view 241
is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken 311
from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard 342
also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of
the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is care- 343
fully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general 351
plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work 512
which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

512 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them,
462 feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cooking
356 and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always
ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the
462 morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks
356 the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of
● 231 the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for
fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl.
234 Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human
charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the
462 farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and
231 horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled
462 with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds
white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two
[251] of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt
PORK.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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THE WOMAN OF THE HOUSE DRIVES HOME A COW

[facing p.36]

512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat
sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women
begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
462 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading
● 231 the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the
house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day
and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] News.

news. An hour or so later[i] the man brings the cattle in from 512
the fields, if they have been grazing during the day. He is 462
ready for evening tea. [231]

At that hour the work of the men is over for the day, but that of the woman goes on. She must prepare, serve, and clean up after the tea, and then go milk the cows brought in from the fields. Her work ends only with the separating that takes place when she brings her milk into the house. Even then, while the men may sit round the fire talking over the day's work or the affairs of the community, she is not idle. If the children need help in lessons, it is she who gives it to them. She puts them to bed, and, if she returns then to join the men at the fire, she continues with knitting and baking. When the whole family has finally gone off to bed, it is she who must close up the house at night and slake the fire in the hearth.

Work round and inside the house is continuous and varies very little from day to day and season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfills its needs of nourishment and shelter in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habitual behaviors. What variation there is in the accepted pattern is itself confined to narrow range. Certain chores indispensable in the day-to-day habits of the people are divided among days of the week. One woman informant, a small farmer's wife in Inagh, gave as her weekly round a much more rigid daily division of tasks than is actually to be observed. On Monday she did the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday she made butter, on Friday she went to market, on Saturday she got ready for Sunday, and on [527]
Sunday she went to mass and did as little as she could. Really, however, it is only on Sunday that there comes any serious alteration in the daily round.

Work in the land beyond the haggard and the house is 512
less restricted and more varied. It has a greater range of

[i] [about 5 P.M. - Analyst]

221 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and
521 cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the begin-
221 ning of spring. For the countryman the return of the
132 "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of
241 the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight
241 after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded atten-
● 231 tion. March and April see the birth of calves and the
beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making.
438 The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years
[407] steam-powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
221 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips
241 and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to
[492] the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with
221 November cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

221

he was in the spring, for the autumn fairs bring him an 231
important market.

If he has been fortunate and industrious, nothing remains 221
for him to do but to prepare his fields for the next year. The 241
soil he has used for root crops must be turned, and the gardens which he intends for grain are ploughed. As he follows the furrows, he can look back upon a year ended, and forward to another to begin. By the time his ploughing is finished, the dead of winter and the holiday season of Christmas is upon him and the yearly round is over.

Yet it is over only to repeat itself. For within the range 221
of the seasonal variation and the demands of growing and maturing crops and animals the pattern of farm work in haggard, garden, meadow, and field is a constant one. Much the same progression of labor flows along year after year, and follows the farmer from boyhood till death. Yet there is much less restriction in choice of operation to be performed, in movement over space, in the possibility of day-to-day variation than in the case of the work of the household.

167 and 1912 the thirteen counties densest in rural population
178 included only six of the counties densest in ploughed land.
241 "Dense tillage was in the east, dense rural population in the west,"[4] as it still is.

In the same search for economic causes, a better case has
167 been made for the change from milch cattle to beef cattle
178 production. As we have seen, milch cows are characteris-
● 231 tically associated with the small farmers. During the period of emigration, the number of dry cattle has risen in proportion to the number of milch cattle almost steadily; the range is from 2,372 total cattle to the 1,000 milch cows in 1854, to 3,334 to the 1,000 in 1926; fluctuations have been very slight. It is true that the number of milch cattle has also risen steadily, if slowly. Such a change in actual numbers of cattle and in proportions of dry to milch cattle, the latter capable of yielding the greater amounts of food for farm consumption, may have had some effect upon the displacement of human beings by cattle, but certainly not a great enough one to determine the emigration. The lack of correspondence between these changes is evident when it is remembered that the change has taken place principally in the former tillage areas, and also that in 1926 the areas of greatest milch cow density were substantially the same as in 1854. The very little direct correspondence there can be is well exemplified in the contrast between County Clare, which fell from a population of 336 to the 1,000 acres of crop and pasture to 129, while milch cows remained practically the same in number (100 to 110 to the 1,000 acres), and County Mayo (a poorer region), where population fell only from 375 to 245 and milch cows also remained practically the same (90 to 100).

From these figures it is evident that the decline in rural population is not directly correlated with decline in tillage or change in cattle production. The failure of employment

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. lvi.

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coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy. 162

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to

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habitual utilization of persons specially skilled in them. They are the ones to whom the small farmers habitually resort. Thus legal sanction might become necessary for matchmaking as soon as land reform made the farmers legal owners of the farms they transfer in the match. But a long experience of court tangles and reprimands by judges was necessary to establish the licensed solicitor as the channel for negotiation. The handy man who was a legal expert and had a fine copyist's hand in the country districts flourished quite a while longer, and flourishes occasionally even now. In the country districts, down to the present, these local specializations were acquired through personal association of one kind or another with former specialists. Very often skills are deemed hereditary in the eyes of the country people. But actually they are acquired as often through gradual development of habit begun out of interest and imitation as by inheritance and parental instruction. They are passed on quite often to others than sons. The following extract from field notes illustrates the development of such skills: 463

> The local man who cuts hair here is a handy man; the man Donnolly, who goes about and kills pigs for his neighbors is a handy man. When we asked, we were told by Flanagan that Donnolly was the butcher and handy man. They butcher only sheep, goats, and pigs. Cattle would be killed by the town butcher. Flanagan said Donnolly was not a true butcher, for he did not serve his time. If they want a boy to be a butcher, they send him to town and pay a fee and he would be trained there. Then they take out papers binding him. Donnolly said he learned it when he was a young man, but now that he was getting old he was not doing it any more. It takes several men to hold the pig, put a hook through the mouth, and kill it with a heavy blow on the head. They take it home, lay it on a table, and take a knife and cut it up. Then it is hung up, salted, and cured. Afterwards the butcher is given a bottle of stout for his work, as well as some fresh meat, while the husbands who helped get nothing.

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341 called the first type *the central-chimney house*, because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered. [171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom. [352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a [354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants [231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

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171 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 211]

342 171 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

The gable-chimney house.

342 In various parts of Ireland I have found numbers of primitive houses with stone-built gables. These houses are always rectangular in form, never oval. Externally the type varies greatly depending mostly on the prevailing wind. On the coast, in very windy districts, the roof will not be built very high, but in more sheltered parts, it will be more lofty.

The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable [341] top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be formed in a corresponding way, as a chimneyshaft without any flue. The chimney-shafts at the gables form perhaps the single example in the Irish peasant house of intentional architecture conforming with a wide-spread custom in Western Europe. As regards the serrated gable-ends see p. 226.

342 354 352 In small dwellings of this type there is only one room, the fireplace is situated against one gable-wall. The most convenient place for the beds is beside the fire, and at least one bed is to be found here. This is a very original feature of this house-type which is confirmed by Scottish material, old Irish descriptions, and even drawings. In the middle-west and north of Ireland, the bed is built in a projection outwards, *cailleach,* or at least in a niche in the side wall close to the fireplace, pl. XLII: 2, as in the Scottish *tig dubh.*

342 As in the central-chimney house, there are sometimes two doors opposite each other, but even a single door is common in small old houses.

Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

342 ● 231 At the lower end of the house, there was in more remote times place for domestic animals. The division of the room by means of the dresser may have been adopted at an early stage, the dresser being especially suitable as

342 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an
● 231 additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as
a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very primitive
342 houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found fireplaces
354 with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in
the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke.

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round
[171] or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere.

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the problem
346 of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

The stone or earth-

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it.

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the [231] low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door.

333 342 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clocháns* etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí*.

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

[172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín*. A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín*, a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes [171] paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea.

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

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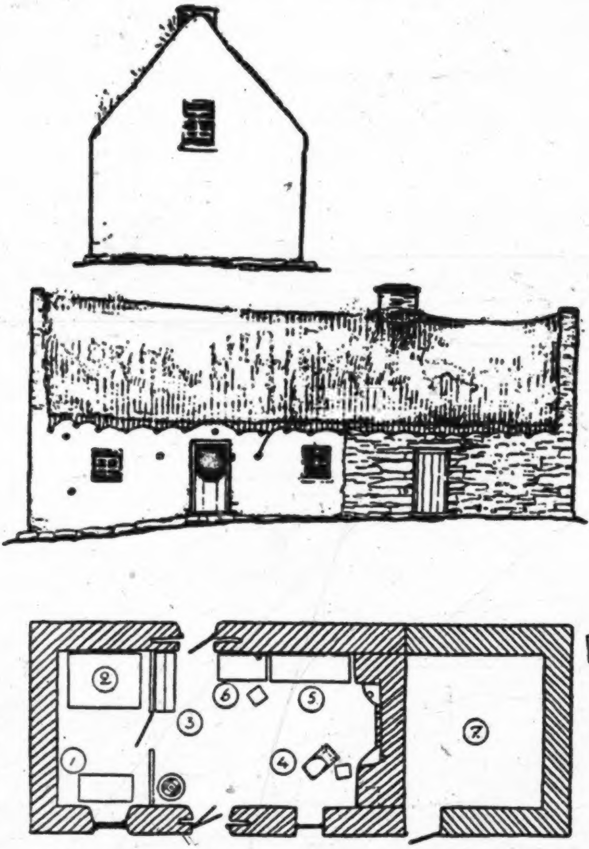

[231] ●

Fig. 4. Gable-chimney house. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry. The cattle once in the lower end of the house. Now removed to a house added to the upper gable wall. 1 table, 2 bed, 3 dresser, 4 cradle, 5 bench, 6 table, 7 sowhouse.

fig. 4. In Co. Kerry, Co. Galway and other parts of Ireland, I have been told of rough strong doors of wattles bound together with ropes of *sugáin*. Such a door, the hurdle door, *sgálán fraoigh* or *scalpán*, was more commonly used as a door for cattle sheds. It is found also in Scotland (see e. g. an illustration showing sheilings in Jura (S. W. Scotland) in Pinkertons Voyages and Travels, vol. III, p. 278, London 1809) and it is mentioned in the Ancient Irish laws. About the two opposite doors and the half-doors see p. 217. [171]

In older times a hole in the wall, a looplight, served as window. It was closed at night with a hay-wisp or a wooden shutter, *cómhla*, which was removed by day and secured at night by a stick placed across or by a latch. [284, 414]

COUNTY GALWAY

342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[12a] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34,a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting
[556] of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier
graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in hou-
[221] ses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when
the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards
[231] the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[12b] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

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361 "An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[19] Mårten Stenberger[20] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[21] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands. 231 349

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[22] 172 174

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *fallai fuara,* as in the stone-built *clocháns,* but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin,* and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[23] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[24] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion. 174

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that 174 342

PLATE 36

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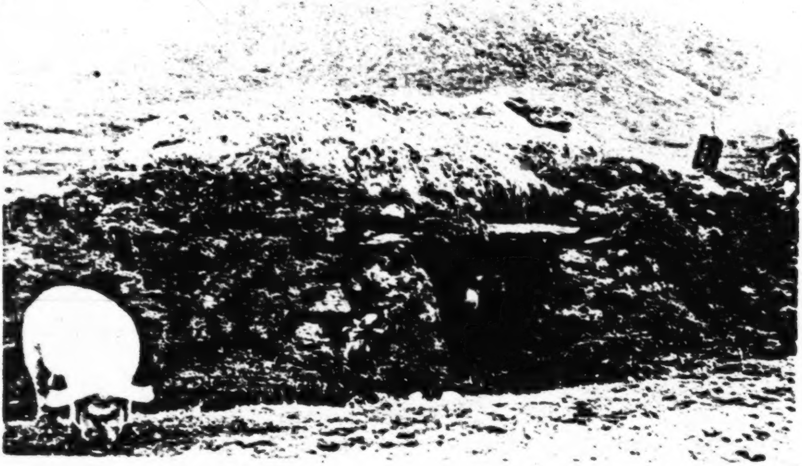

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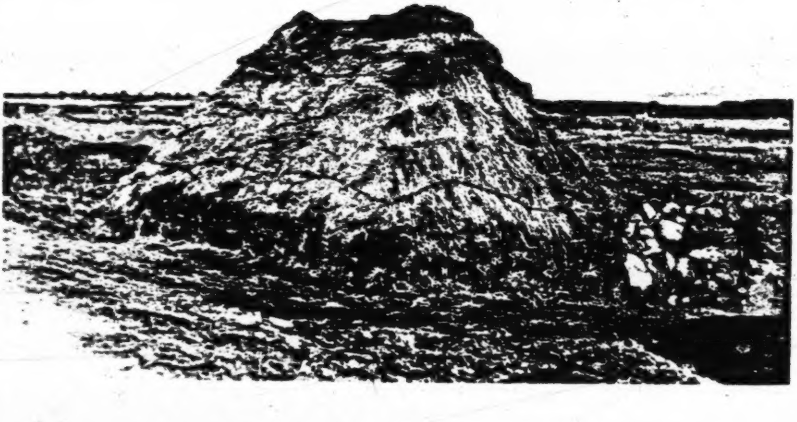

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a. Sod house. Conamara, Co. Galway.
b. Sod house. Glin, Co. Limerick.

5: Ó Danachair I-5 (no date) 1956 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness
121 is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and
his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is
influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of
husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and
economic position in the community.

The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
132 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
251 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on
which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as
● 231 are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume
234 or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding,
stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of
cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a
man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area
of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten
311 cows" is still a familiar term.

241 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less

351 361 four feet high, with gates suitably placed. A door in the back of the dwelling house leads into a garden and orchard. In both these examples the front of the dwelling house is towards the yard, but in very many examples the back of the dwelling house is towards the yard, which is reached by a back door, while the front of the house faces a small garden with flowers and fruit trees through which a path leads to the front door. This is especially common in east Munster. Figure 3 shows the buildings on a smaller farm in the south-eastern part of Co. Galway. Here again we have a courtyard formed by buildings on three sides and a stone wall with a gate on the fourth, but the courtyard is divided into two parts by another wall which protects the portion in front of the dwelling house, which is a little garden with flowers and shrubs, from the animals which pass through the yard.

In the smaller farms of the north and west there usually are fewer buildings, and these are often joined together in one continuous row, as in the example shown in figure 4, on a small farm in Co. Tyrone, where dwelling house, stable, byre and a store form one long block of buildings. Here, the elements are clearly distinguished from each other—the byre and stable are more roughly built, with poorer roof timbers and thinner walls, than the dwelling house, while the store at the other end is narrower than the dwelling house and has a lower roof. Indeed most examples of this well-known and widespread type have the dwelling house clearly distinguishable from the outhouses; thus they must not be confused with the "long-house" of Wales, of which the distinctive feature is internal communication between the byre and the dwelling.[1] In contrast to this, there is no such internal communication in this Irish type, as each house, stable, byre, store and so on has its own entrance door, and very often the dwelling house and byre do not adjoin, but have a stable, store or dairy between them. But, as we shall see below, there is—or was until recently—a primitive form of the "long house" or combined dwelling house and cattle byre to be found in certain parts of Ireland.

Another farmyard form to be found in parts of the north and west, and especially in the hill districts and peninsulas of west Munster, is shown in fig. 5. Here the outhouses are built in one continuous row, and placed a short distance away from, and parallel to, the dwelling house; the space between the dwelling house and the outhouses serving not only as a yard but also as a passage between the public road and the farmer's fields; this yard or passage is, in many districts, called the "street".

In addition to these various farmyard types, there may be found farms in which the buildings are not arranged in any set plan, but are scattered about in a haphazard fashion, sometimes without any yard; these occur but rarely in fertile lowlands but are not infrequent in mountain and moorland localities, such as parts of the Kerry mountains.

231 351 361 It cannot be doubted that the system of having separate compartments or buildings for the different kinds of animals and stores is of considerable antiquity in Ireland. The law tract *Críth Gabhlach*, written about A.D. 700, states that the *bó-aire febhsa* (a certain grade of land owner) must have, in addition to his dwelling house and a share in a corn-mill, a kiln, a barn, a sheep-fold, a pigsty and a calf-pen.[2] Another ancient law tract[3] refers to five "houses", namely, dwelling house, cow-

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[1] PEATE, I. C.: The Welsh House, 1940, chapter IV.

[2] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. IV, Dublin, 1879, 309.

[3] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. V, Dublin, 1901, 515.

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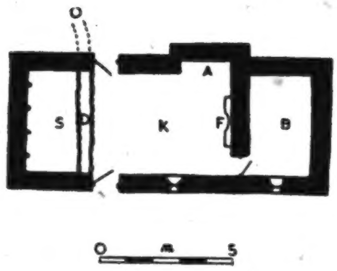
351
361
[342]

house, pigsty, calf-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigstyes.



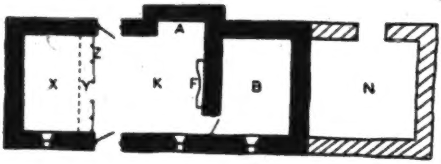


Fig. 10 House at Doolough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahataggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[1] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was rambling about for prey."[2] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the county—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and [513] sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[3]

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—

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[1] Fynes Moryson: Itinerary, 1617.

[2] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1699), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.

[3] Doheny, M.: The Felon's Track.

[113]

231 those who had little or no land—commonly kept their animals in the dwelling house (which often
351 had only one room) at night, a cow or two, or perhaps a donkey or pony, a pig or a goat and a
few hens, the larger animals tied to pegs or rings set in the walls, the smaller in coops or boxes.
361 In many houses, even large farmhouses, a special coop or perch was provided for the cock, whose crowing served to call the people of the house in the morning. A vivid description of the housing conditions of a remote and isolated community in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry in the extreme south west: "There was a coop beside the partition with hens in it, and a hatching hen in an old pot nearby. At night a cow or two, a calf or two, an ass, two dogs tied to the wall or loose about the house. … the two or three dogs would lie at the foot of the bed, the cow or two cows below them, tethered to the wall, the calf or two with the run of the kitchen and their muzzles in the fire. The ass was tied on the side of the house opposite the cows, and a cat with a couple of kittens in the fireplace niche … And as well as all the other animals you might find a pet lamb or two about the house."[1] The custom of bringing the cattle into the dwelling house for milking during the period of the year when they are kept outdoors, as well as keeping them in the dwelling house during the winter period is recorded from Co. Kerry.[2] Indeed it is quite clear that, throughout the west and north of Ireland, the keeping of livestock in their small dwelling houses by the poorer people was quite a common practice up to the last years of the nineteenth century, and in houses from which the animals have long been ejected we may still see the rings or pegs to which they used to be tied.

There was, however, one type of house which was built and arranged as a dwelling for both
342 people and animals, and which was still in use in the early years of the present century in parts of
351 Connaught and Ulster, that is, in west Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, west Co. Sligo and west and north
Co. Donegal. Figure 10 shows the plan of a typical specimen, at Doolough, Co. Mayo. This house
361 is 12 m long and 5.5 m wide, built of stone and mortar and roofed with straw or grass thatch.
231 It consists of two apartments, the smaller being a bedroom and the larger a kitchen-livingroom-cattle byre; the two apartments separated by the wall of the hearth. On one side of the hearth is a bed alcove. Two windows, one in each room and both on one side—the front—of the house, give light, and there are two doors, one in the front of the house and one in the back, placed directly opposite each other. On the farther side of these doors from the fire an open drain extends from side to side of the house; this drain is about 50 cm wide and 25 cm deep and is lined with flat stones. The space between this drain and the end wall of the house is the byre, and here, during the winter, three or four cows were kept tethered to the wall. The drain passed under the wall and led to the manure heap outside.

Figure 11 shows the manner in which many of these houses were changed during the last fifty years or so. A byre was built, attached to the house, as here, or quite apart from it. The drain was filled in, and a partition of wood, or, as here of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, erected to enclose the former byre which now became a bedroom. In many houses the partition was formed

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[1] Ó Crohan, Tomás: An tOileánach, chapter III.

[2] Campbell, Åke: "Irish Fields and Houses", Béaloideas, v, 68–70.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or 231
press. 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small 361
areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once 351
more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory
of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still [173]
exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off
by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and [184]
east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and
there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and
hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible.

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost 361
the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of
village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farm- 351
yard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type.

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

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[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, xvi, 102, 104.

[2] Flatrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

241 also send one upon many false scents. One must use them with proper care. In such a case as this, care consists in discovering correlations and fitting them into wholes. For example, one learns little or nothing of various kinds of human beings if one counts only single characteristics. On the other hand, if one counts a wide variety of numerable features and finds one human group distinguishing itself again and again within this wide variety, one is justified in thinking one is dealing with a class of which the individuals are instances.

So it is with the economic data in the Irish records. The small farmers do appear as a true category. They reveal themselves in the cold figures as a class with habits of life of its own, different in kind and in quantitative expression from all others.

Rather than delay over the reasoning which leads to this conclusion, I should prefer to recite the distinguishing marks in the economic sphere.

231 First, it is clear that the small farmers practise
241 a type of agriculture all their own. Their products
434 differ widely from those of the large farmers, some-
437 times in kind, sometimes in proportion. The large farmer is a cattleman, a stockman. The small farmer is typically what we have come to call in this country 'a subsistence farmer'. Both depend primarily upon livestock, for Ireland is a country of grass and pasturage, depending less upon tillage than any other European land. But their economies

are quite distinct. The small farmer cultivates a 231
'garden' of oats, rye, potatoes, cabbage and tur- 241
nips, and devotes his pasture and the hay of his 434
fields to milch cattle. He sells his cows' increase 437
each year. He keeps large numbers of hens and a few pigs. But the milch cow is the centre round which this economy revolves. Nearly all he raises he consumes at home; his family and his farm animals take the greater part of his produce. It is only his surplus and his annual crop of calves which break out of the circle of subsistence and in so doing bring him the only monetary income he receives.

In all this he differs considerably from the big farmer, particularly the so-called 'rancher' of Irish agriculture. The big farmer is primarily a producer of beef. He concentrates upon the production of fat cattle; he depends upon a monetary market in which to dispose of his fattened stock. Upon this market he relies for the supplies which feed himself and his labourers. If he is wealthier and much more of a man of business, he is also nearly entirely dependent upon the whims of price and demand.

Naturally, then, the small farmer and big farmer play quite distinct roles in the economics of exchange, distribution and commerce. The small farmer disposes of his cattle, usually calves of his own breeding, quite differently. He sells this surplus to the dealer, the middleman, the big farmer.

231 241 434 437 As calves grow up they move from the small farm to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them until they are ready for the English table. Consequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers
262 184 should be different consumers from the rest. They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the
meats and the shop products which fall to the lot
of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings
to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon
spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and
the poor quality of his land confine him to the
manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family.
The countryman's subsistence farming is a family
economy in which all members of the family take
part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He
differs completely in this regard from the large
farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are
wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He
works a small farm with the help of his family. He
raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other
foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

231 241 434 which beasts feed him in their turn. He need go to town only for clothing and sundries, for flour and tea, and to sell at the fairs the calves and yearlings which bring in his principal monetary income and provide thus for whatever he cannot produce at home. These cattle go to big farmers, ranchers and shippers; and with the sale his participation in trade and commerce, in 'business', is finished except for his account with the shopkeeper (and in late years, the creamery). As you can well imagine, it is a livelihood little connected with the outside world, and now that agrarian reform has made him full owner of his holding, it is little open to disturbance from the outside.

This is the external view of the small farm. It is the view that usually satisfies the economist. But if one probes deeper and looks at the small farmer's livelihood from within, a fuller picture appears.

241 593 [461] That the small farmer is a family man even at work is important for the study of human behaviour. Eight out of ten people working in agriculture in Ireland work not for wages and salaries but by virtue of their family relationship. The work a man does and the directions he gives and receives take form within a social group. That fact yields an opportunity for the anthropologist. Here, in a modern country, is an economy in which there are other controls on labour than those we know—money, contracts, individual profit. To under-

stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus 241 593
of the countryman's way of life.

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the 361
small farmer's family lives upon the holding it 592
works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them.

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, 231
it is natural that this unit should be known and 311
judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in 592
Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

311 tain', and wherever possible, it includes a 'bit of
● 231 bog' for 'turf' for the year's fuel. When a small
592 farmer tells you he 'has the place of four cows' he sums up this sort of farm, judging it for its ability to support himself and his family in the country manner and to give pasture to four milch cows. In the phrase he epitomizes rural economy.

592 Ordinarily the house opens directly into the
361 'haggard', as the farmyard is called. There in the haggard are the cabins in which cattle are housed and the various sheds and stalls, often built into the masonry of the house itself. In them, farm machines, tools and carts are kept and crops and seed are stored. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are housed there, and in one of the sheds pig or pigs find their quarters. The winter's supply of fodder stands there in the form of the great hayrick. The straw-covered pit of turnips and mangels, not far away, will serve for men and cattle; and the turf-rick is near at hand. As for the house itself we have already looked inside, in our search for the 'west room'.

592 The family with which this unit is associated centres its activity round house and haggard. Even for the men, whose work lies primarily in field, garden and meadow, work centres round the house for a good part of the year. If I give you a sketch of this activity as my co-workers and I saw it day after day in several rural communities in Clare, I hope to throw its general features into relief.

Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out 521 561
through the bog mud to the famine road, before 888
the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunnagore? [482]

Often the expressions take a different turn. They 517
become that universal complaint — the younger 521
generation. "Young people aren't what they used 561
to be," said one old farmer in the course of a 888
general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one 561
from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. 521 888
"Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle
and he putting them in small fields and late in the [231]
night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community, 172 the Celtic tongue was imported by warlike overlords or "planters" somewhere within the limits of the Bronze Age, and that it was accompanied by the infiltration of ideas and customs that have their ultimate origin in central Europe and therefore represent a culture-pattern differing from the pre-existing "Atlantic" civilisation. But archæology teaches us that the older background was strong enough to survive and mould the new into characteristic Irish forms: even the virile curvilinear "La Tène" art style of the Early Iron Age, which entered Ireland by the north-eastern "bridgehead," was soon changed into new designs which the expert can at once recognize as "Irish" (Fig. 7). In peasant culture the continuity is incontrovertible.

But great changes were meanwhile taking place in the climate and natural landscape, and corresponding adaptations had to be made in Irish life. The onset of a cold stormy period not far from 500 B.C. forced man to move downhill and to concentrate on the drier lowlands, while on plateau and plain alike the old forests went down under layer after layer of wet bogland. When the veil is half lifted in the twilight of the Celtic Annals ten domesticated creatures are mentioned: kine, swine, horses, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, hens, geese and bees. To-day the only important additions would be the ass, the turkey and the duck. There are many signs that during the bad climate of sub-Atlantic times (say 500 B.C.-100 B.C.) cattle assumed the preponderating place in peasant economy which they have since maintained. It was their grazing, and the nibbling of the accompanying goats, which caused the great decline in the indigenous woodlands long before the forest remnants were destroyed by the English. The old custom of putting a goat with a herd of cows is perhaps a
● [231] survival of former practice, for the goats would have kept down tree-growth and so prepared pasture for the cattle.

But it must be insisted that the theoretical nomadism of the Celtic period finds little support in archæology: the 28,000 surviving earthworks known as "raths"—the sites of villages and cattle-enclosures—testify to the settled life of the dark

[Text continues top of p. 34--Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

132 winters—all these characteristics are related to the eastward moving stream of cyclones coming off the warm North Atlantic drift. Rain is heaviest wherever mountain masses place obstacles in the path of the moisture-bearing winds, and the peninsulas of Donegal, Connemara and Kerry have from 60 to 100 inches of rain each year (Fig. 8). By contrast the east coast gets about half this amount, while the low-lying tract between Dublin and Drogheda is favoured by a fall of under 30 ins. Everywhere the mildness and the damp encourage grasses and moisture-loving plants, but too often waterlogging has caused green pastures and woodlands to deteriorate into brown bogland. The prolonged autumns, another gift of the Atlantic, are important because they give man a sporting chance of saving his harvests: the heaviest rains are delayed until November and December. Similarly the relatively dry springs (March-May) are conducive to work in field and turf-bog at that season. (Chapter 15).

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241 Reviewing the distribution of the chief crops and animals to-day, the following facts may be noted. Nearly one half the land devoted to crops, excluding hay, is occupied by oats and perhaps three-quarters of the yield is fed to livestock. Only in the wettest peninsulas of Connemara and Kerry does another crop (potatoes) occupy more land. It is estimated that the "consumption" of potatoes amounts to about ¾ ton per head of the population each year, but the greater part of this goes to pigs and other livestock. The greatest concentration of wheat production is in the comparatively sunny corner of Wexford, with secondary areas along the dry east coast in Cos. Dublin and Down. Recent years have witnessed an increase in wheat growing but there is still far less than in the record years of a century ago. when wheat was being exported to England. Barley, which is more intolerant of damp than wheat, is found on the well-drained soils of Co. Louth but particularly of Wexford and the sheltered valleys of the Nore, Suir and Barrow. It has declined less than wheat
273 because of the demand of the breweries and distilleries, but the drop in the illicit making of poteen has reduced its production in many a secluded spot along the west coast.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the
pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. [178]
But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of
archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their
importance in the past: one minor factor in the decline is the [273]
fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

235 considered that the abundance of wild white clover, on the
seeds of which chickens and young turkeys feed, was another
contributory factor. Of the goat it can be said that it is often
● 231 the poor man's milk supply and supplements the cow on many
small farms just as the ass replaces or supplements the horse.
But the ass is in fact quite rare in many parts of the country,
for example in Donegal, and is regarded with contempt,
whereas the horse, as befits its important role since prehistoric
times, is held in high regard and is kept by small farmers
often as much for the sake of prestige as for its use. " If
they have three acres," says a Government Report of last
century, " they think they must have a horse." The strength
and speed of the Irish race horse have been attributed to the
bone-building qualities of limestone pastures: the great
breeding and training ground is the morainic waste known as
the Curragh of Kildare, but throughout the country there are
many districts where, for geographical or historical reasons,
horses of quality are bred for export and for the delight of the
crowds at local race-meetings. Readers are referred to
[113] Dr. Dudley Stamp's *Agricultural Atlas of Ireland* (1931) for
further information on agricultural distributions.

172

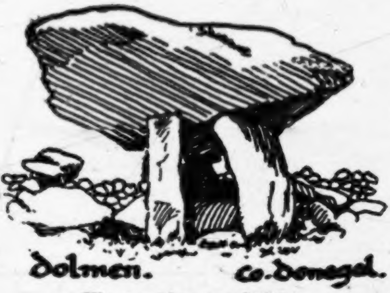

Fig. 9. About 10 ft. high.

172 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can
311 be recognized, for example those with upright stones at
351 intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones"
after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

351 Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furze) about the
314 farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford
137 to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they
form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready
●[231] source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots
were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognize the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

351 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the
311 ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins
137 and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands
the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale 174
agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it 221
resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous 361
subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of
inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all [428]
his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken
of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and
even a half-foot or " cleet."

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale 174
system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, 621
confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed, have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds, for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities. Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill. Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in this way.

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a [622]
townland or group of townlands to see that customs were observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips, and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and Tory a relic of this custom.

To understand the village-system in working order we 174
must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 621
221
231

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174 played a dominant part, to which the claims of agriculture were
621 subordinated. It was customary for the young folk, and in
221 some cases the whole family, to leave the village as soon as the
● 231 crops were sown and migrate to summer pastures among the
hills. This custom is still widely followed in various mountain areas in Europe, for instance Switzerland and Spain, where it can be shown to be of great antiquity. To it the name "transhumance" is given, but we shall use the term "booleying," from "booley" (milking place), or summer hill dwelling. It is strange that scarcely any attention has been given or any importance attached to this aspect of the Irish past, despite its direct bearing on the social and cultural as well as the economic development of rural Ireland, on language and literature, music and the arts. From rare memories or survivals of the custom—it is still followed on Achill Island—and by analogy with transhumant societies overseas, we can envisage the part played by booleying in ancient Ireland, where its wide occurrence was facilitated by the presence of scattered mountain masses in all parts of the island (Chapter 2). We shall refer to some survivals below. The illustration (Fig. 15) shows a bullock's "horn" which used to be blown not long ago at a farm in the Torr Head district of Co. Antrim, to summon people together. One is tempted to see in this custom a relic of the pastoral heritage. Traditions of hospitality are a common accompaniment of pastoral life: there is no need to stress the reputation of the country people in this connexion, but it is relevant to add that the lavish hospitality for which the landed aristocracy have been famous may well have been derived from Gaelic custom.

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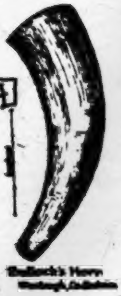

Fig. 15.

Wherever it is found, this seasonal nomadism assumes a ritual significance, especially where, as in the old Ireland, cattle are its main concern. Thus the departure of the herds and their attendants in spring is accompanied by festivities and ceremonial; and the return to the homestead in autumn is the occasion for the rejoicings and reunions of Hallowe'en, when the youngsters play seasonal games among themselves and tricks upon their elders. We shall revert to this topic in chapter 17. Here we are concerned rather to describe the life

among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century
ago, " the migration usually took place upon a fixed day,
the junior members of the family generally perform the
journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair
or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various
selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive
power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one
side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often
thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in " booley " or " boley " 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with
sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were
circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still
kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr.
Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked
in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven
out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the
inhabitants of a particular " town" presumably living together.
Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the
herders consisted largely of " whitemeats " that is milk
products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been
of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is
probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of
southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [251]
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying
it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This
" bog-butter " frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations :
it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese.
A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven
stones of butter.

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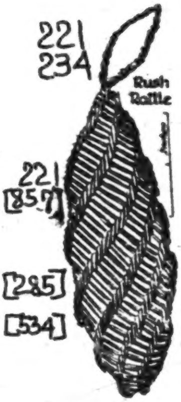

Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

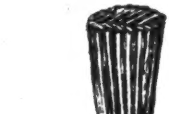

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

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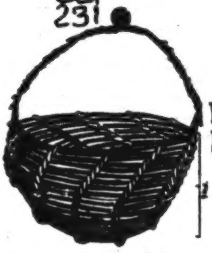
the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the 221 mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism.

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on 221 231 many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. [285] It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely [415] to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. " Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, " are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."



Rush "Truog" Basket

Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending (" herding ") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. " Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, " are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of " sums " it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring [422] the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are " tokened " by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally [413] it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. " Gatherings " and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens [343] of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

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342 oval in plan: the problem of the origin of the hipped roof is discussed in Chapter 9. It should be realized that there are many transition types, and of course slated houses are rapidly replacing the old styles, but the division into upright gables and hipped roofs is fundamental. Dr. Campbell's pioneer work in this field has met with a hostile reception in some quarters: [113] see for example Mr. Colm Ó Lochlainn's review in *The Irish Book Lover*, January, 1940.

Within these broad divisions there is endless variety of construction, internal lay-out and roofing technique. Of special interest is the projecting bed-wing, the "outshot" or "cailleach" (Fig. 19), which is attached to gabled houses throughout the north-west from Co. Derry to Co. Galway. It may be compared with the "half-neuk" beds of the Orkneys and Faroes, and has its parallels too in the wall-beds of the Hebridean black-houses. The device allows the large bed (6 ft. by 4) to take its traditional place at the fire-end of the house without unduly narrowing the all-important space around the hearth. The bed recess is cut off from the room by curtains or, formerly, by hanging straw mats.

342
●231 Single-roomed kitchen byres, where the family occupies the top or hearth-end and cattle the other, are now a thing of the past, but a few examples have survived in their original state, with an open drain crossing the floor and emptying at the side of the door. The custom of taking the animals under the family roof was once prevalent over north-western Europe in regions of difficulty where access to the cattle in all weathers was a determining factor. Tenacious usage rather than poverty ensured its survival into recent times, where the mutual advantage of the custom is summed up in the phrases, "the cow keeps the house warm," and "warmth increases the yield of milk." Two other points should be borne in mind, its relation to the system of booleying described in Chapter 5, and the necessity in former times of protecting the precious animals from wild beasts.

342 As a rule the bottom or byre-end was later converted into a dairy, store or spare bedroom, but the principal bedroom,

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352 bee-hive were common in some districts, but in parts of Mayo one rarely sees chairs of any kind. Step or ladder backed chairs with rush or straw seats are widespread: in the north-east chairs with wooden seats and upright-barred backs are [372] perhaps more usual. The turf fire is never allowed to go out: the glowing turves are heaped with ash at night and can be readily blown into a flame in the morning.

342 If the house has kept its brace and wattled chimney we shall be sitting under a canopy which tapers upwards to the smoke hole. The brace is a great beam extending from wall to wall, or resting at one end on a post some 5 feet out from the end-wall: between post and wall there may be a side partition or curtain-wall (Fig. 27) known in the Armagh-Meath area as the jamb-wall or the "hollan."[1] In some districts the front door is placed opposite this wall, but not, I fancy, in really old houses. In that case there may be a small window—the "spy-hole" "entry," or "jamb-window"—in the partition, allowing the sitter at the fireside to keep an eye on the open door. I have seen several houses in Co. Armagh where one has to stoop under the projecting brace to enter the house (Fig. 27). A further development is to hang a door on the brace-post, thus making a kind of internal porch or small hall. The jamb-wall is found from Co. Down to Co. Limerick but I have not seen it in the north-western province of the outshot.

342
352 The canopy is constructed of wattles or of sugán, plastered with mud and cow-dung and white-washed outside. Canvas or boards are recent substitutes. At the sides of the chimney, above the ends of the brace, are small lofts or storeplaces, and there may be a larger "half-loft" over the other end of the kitchen—a relic of the time when corn and hay were kept here for feeding the animals below. A usual feature, under the stone seat to one side of the fire, is the ash or rubbish pit, another survival from far prehistory; and balancing it on the other side of the fire there may be a warm stone recess for the ● [231] sitting hen. At the back of the fire is a thick flag—the backstone—or a mass of clay forming the hob, but this is carefully built up of stones or bricks in eastern and southern

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[1] This word is also used in N. England and Scotland for the curtain-wall. In Lancashire it is termed the "speer."

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kinds of construction are employed. Some districts use strong 343 stone buildings—for example of the bee-hive style to be described below—others roofless rectangles of stone with one end open, and others again timber-posted structures with roofs and walls of many different materials. These supplies are generally supplemented by well-built turf-stacks, and it used to be the custom to build a great stack against the gable of the house, both for shelter and to keep the house warm. Turf-stacks were occasionally built hollow to serve as a pigsty. [231] In the north of Ireland the pig is by no means universally kept, though most old homesteads have a building which once did duty as a sty, and in some parts of the country these are of bee-hive construction, so strongly built that they have defied the ravages of time.

Just as old practices live on as children's games, so certain ancient types of buildings have descended in the social scale in the course of history. The bee-hive corbelled huts and the corn-drying kilns are examples. Both are circular in plan and built of dry stones or stones and mud. In the Gaeltacht the bee-hive houses are used, from Mayo to Kerry, for storing milk or turf. They are made by overlapping the flat slabs of the walls until they meet at the top in a false dome—a style of building which, in its origin, long precedes the arch and is seen at its best in some of the oldest monuments of human industry in Ireland, the prehistoric chambered tombs of the Boyne [172] valley. Not far from this metropolis of ancient culture, in the Carlingford Hills of north Louth, Mr. H. G. Tempest has shown me several corbelled huts, some of which are still used as pigsties, while in Lecale in Down there are many examples, both circular and square in plan, which have been used as pigsties and hen houses (Figs. 38 & 39). These are generally grouted on top and whitewashed, but those of Louth and the west may have a covering of earth which, growing a crop of grass and weeds, gives the little houses the appearance of natural hillocks. Similar pigsties are known in south-eastern Wales, and have been described by Dr. I. C. Peate in his book *The Welsh House*. Corbelled huts are also used as pigsties and poultry houses in Caithness and the Orkneys.

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CHAPTER XI.

HARVEST.

In this chapter we shall give an account of some harvesting customs which depend on a minimum of mechanical appliances. We begin with the hay harvest, the first of the season. The new agriculture represented by turnips and rotation grasses has, in its diffusion from England during the last two centuries, still barely touched the remoter parts of Ireland, where hay until lately had no place in the scheme of cultivation. Successive crops of corn and potatoes were taken so long as the land would yield anything, when it was allowed to grow wild grasses and weeds until the time came to break it up once more. Oat straw, which is never chaffed, to some extent took the place of hay, which, apart from a limited amount of meadow hay and "sprit," was chiefly gathered from waste places and mearings and reserved for horses and milk cows. It should be noticed that the old customs of herding, tethering and spancelling permitted the stock to graze in places where hay could not be made. Moreover natural hay, ripened but left uncut, was utilized to a great extent along the mild coasts. 241 246 [231]

Scandinavian archæologists have shown that the practice of preserving grass as hay for winter use began in that region during the cold wet phase of climate known as the Sub-Atlantic (Chapter 4). So it may have been in Ireland, too: the scythe and the iron hook have their origin in the Early Iron Age, and some of the methods of securing the crop can have changed little in two thousand years. On small farms 246

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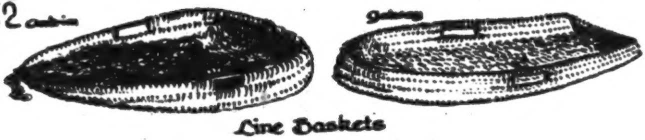

Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets (" kishauns ") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such " lipe-work " was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

[282]

● [231]

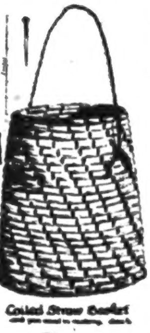

Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77*a*) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a " thraw-hook " of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple " twister " of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

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[231]

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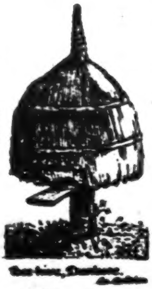

Fig. 77*a*.
Height 4 ft.

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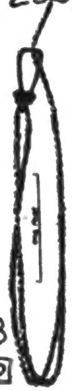

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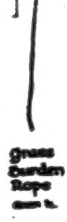
[492]

Rush Burden Rope Donegal

Fig. 80.

[824]



[284]

● 231
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Grass Burden Rope Antrim

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

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and similarly the cattle were fastened in the byre by ropes 231 of straw, as in Clare, or of horse-hair, as in Kerry. Of the 283 two burden ropes illustrated (Figs. 80, 81) the Donegal example is a two-ply rush rope with an eye made of a peeled stick bent into a loop: the Aran specimen is of grass (Manilla) rope [284] passing through a hole in a wooden runner. Similar blocks of wood serve as a swivel to prevent kinks in tethering ropes, separate lengths of rope passing through each hole.

Reference has been made to the fir-ropes used in securing 283 roofing scraws and thatch. Thin splits of straight-grained bog-fir about four feet long and an inch wide are twisted by hand into hollow cylinders, joined end to end to make a coil of about 50 feet. Two or three of these are twisted together to give the finished product, which combines great strength and elasticity with the capacity to stand up to all weathers. Fir-rope was often stretched across the wooden bed-frame to [352] make a springy mattress. A short " tie " of fir-rope is shown in Fig. 21, p. 63.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942

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cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

222

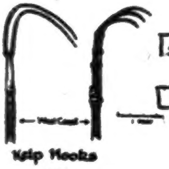

Fig. 102.

[413]
[244]
[439]

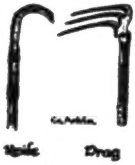

Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

231
222
262
●

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

227
228
[439]

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "*lobster-pot*" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

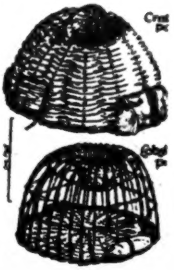

Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894

ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Inishbofin

241 [423] sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.

[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. [231] A family keeps a couple of pigs, some sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on [237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de vâche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894

ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty
assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot,
415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps,
352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker
frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The
furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds;
a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft
● 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the
kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place,
while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of
[491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are
492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried
[482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home
potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back
of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a sideways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies
[243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain,
and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

501 For water transport there are a good many boats of various
descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the
[505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather
permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894

ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Inishbofin

There is another cross *in* the church which is of much finer 172
workmanship, and is probably the true *Leac Leo*. In 1870, when
Mr. Kinahan visited the island, the church was in ruins, and was used [231]
as a cattle pen, and the cross, or a stone coffin lid, he is not at this
time able to say which, was set up on its side, leaving a space between
it and the wall to form a trough.

(3.) *St Leo's Cave* (*Uaimh Leo*), on the south side of the island.

(4.) *Thobhar Leo.*—St. Leo's Well is situated, not in the cave, but some distance from the top of a deep and almost precipitous cove, called *Fuath Leo.*

(5.) *Cloghan Leo* is a small round cell, now almost completely ruinous, built within an enclosure of very little larger area. The saint's footprint is pointed out in the rock on which the building stands.

VII.—History.

As a Paper of this nature would be incomplete without some mention of the changes and vicissitudes that the population of the islands 175
has undergone, a slight historical sketch is attempted here. It is not, and does not pretend to be, complete, as unfortunately the material available is very scanty, especially in regard to its earlier history; for, though the Venerable Bede, the Four Masters, and others make several references to the islands, yet these nearly all relate to ecclesiastical events, which have at most only a secondary bearing on the history of the people, and are not within the scope of this Paper.

The annalists record that in the second century a tribe of the Firbolgs (Clann Humoir) who occupied that part of the mainland opposite the islands were conquered and enslaved by Tuathal Teachtmar, a Scotic or Milesian monarch, and it is probable, if the islands were inhabited by members of the first-named people, that they shared the same fate as the rest of their tribe. It is not known whether such was the case, as this is "the only mention of this teritory while in the hands of the Belgae," says O'Donovan in his "Letters," except that one of their chiefs named Modh, or Modha, gave his name to Inis Modha, or the Clew Bay islands. After the conquest of the Clann Humoir the territory came into the hands of the Milesians, and the records about it relate, at first, to the deaths of their chiefs, and later on in the 9th century to the incursions of pirates (believed to have been Scandinavians), but make no specific mention of Inishbofin or its inhabitants.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
● 231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
372 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have
now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there
is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are
turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the
turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several
parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter
use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a
couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they
stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time.
[435] The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster
pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when
they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina,
whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the
people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until
the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 ●231 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

513 The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

[834] A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

262 3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

[272] The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 264 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal) stirabout, buttermilk.

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[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It 342
generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments.

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for [231]
the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the backs of the cattle.

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the [354]
kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth.

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen 352
consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples.

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a 415
griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food,

776 the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies.

178 789 Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with.

788 The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved.

231 432 The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith.

787 Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband.

832 There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still

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[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

121 IRELAND'S decline in population
has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for
her people. This article deals with one
of the poorest and most isolated dis-
tricts of the country, an island off the
[434] west coast which, for over 60 years, has
received government help in various
forms, as well as money from relations
in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably con-
tented community not untypical of
many in the west of Ireland, all of
them Roman Catholic in religion and
depending on the priest for the main
leadership. Emigration continues, but
those left behind and those who return
to the island have a leisured way of

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114 *The material for this paper was partly col-
lected during a visit with the Geographical
Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author
visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 house-
holds recorded the numbers of the household,
information on those who had emigrated, the
area of the farm, number of stock, methods of
selling produce, and other sources of income,
such as fishing or work on the roads. Within
this range the answers were generally reliable,
but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful
and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
almost invariably understated as there are
[578] jealousies between households about the use of
commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer
●[231] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep
or so" but the following morning he had 23
lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was
impossible to resist the comment over the garden
wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed
in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956,
pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones
Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

[p.205(B)]

314 year the feed of a dozen sheep is burnt
in the homes."

Agricultural life depends on the use
311 of the "commonage," or rough pasture,
● 231 and the improved land, which is almost
entirely drift fertilized by seaweed and
632 farmyard manure. Two-thirds of the
island's 2480 acres is rough pasture, used
for the sheep, cattle, ponies, and donkeys, as well as for peat collection.
Figure 1 shows that the island is divided
into five townlands, in each of which
the commonage is shared, with the result that a farmer may take his animals
not to the rough pasture near his holding but to ground as much as a mile
away. There is a band of farm lands
311 stretching from lough Bofin to the har-

342 511 [657] been built for almost the entire population. In 1893 it was said that there were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds, so that peat was stacked in a corner of the cottage with the fowls roosting on it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace, the cattle in a pen at the other end of the room, and the farm implements and fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] [343] Now the old houses are the outbuildings, still thatched, with oat straw (not rye as formerly) laid on sods and tied down with home-made straw ropes weighted with large stones. Only five thatched houses were still inhabited in 1954. Some of the thatch has sprouting oats and some of it is rotten, but, when a roof is beyond further repair, it is all stripped off and the sodding and thatching begins again. Happily, corrugated iron is not used as it cannot stand the weather.

FARMING

241 Agricultural practice is almost uniform: an acre or so is divided between oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—barley, and there is generally a small patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions, carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen. The ground used for crops is called the "garden," and its fertility is maintained by using animal manure and seaweed, and also by rotating the crops. Strange (or "foreign") seed is favored, and [657] bought at a cheap rate under a government scheme. The remainder of the farmstead consists of a varying amount of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and some pasture. The precious crops are ● [231] carefully walled, but some of the farmers open their fields to the cattle and sheep after the harvest, partly as a means of natural fertilizing.

231; 439 Each farmer has one or two cows and

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[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when
they are sold either to dealers on the
island or to visiting dealers from the
mainland. No cattle are slaughtered
for meat on the island at present as it
pays better to send them on to the fairs
at Clifden. The dealers wait for a
favorable opportunity of selling the
stock and the farmers agreed that these
arrangements were far better than individual
visits to the fair by the difficult
route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[13] has been
highly successful; there are accredited
bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen
Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever
bought. As one of the islanders put it,
437 "You wouldn't understand our ways,
sir. If we have a bit of butter over,
there's sure to be someone who can
do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and
pastured on the common lands; there
are probably at least 1000 sheep owned
by the farmers on this island. The
sheep are sold to the butcher for the
island's only meat supply, or to dealers
for eventual sale on the mainland, and
the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm
which sends a representative to the
island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only
a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small
number of people have geese, ducks, or
turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war,
eggs were sold at 3d. each for export,
but transport difficulties and the failure
to develop any marketing scheme have
long since extinguished the trade. The
lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

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[113] [13] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

231 is said to be due to the expense of importing
feedstuffs. Donkeys and Connemara
[492] ponies are kept as draft animals,
and almost everything is conveyed
in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was
made in 1907 by a local carpenter from
one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required,
including lobster pots, fishing nets, furniture,
doors, windows, and hand barrows,
which consist of two shafts joined
by slats and a single wheel in the rear,
all of wood.

Digging and manuring of the land
221 begins in late February, and seaweed is
brought from the shore as needed. The potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's Day (March 17); oats, two to three weeks later; barley and mangolds at the end of April or in May. Most calves are born from March to May. In dry years peat is cut from May onwards, laid out to dry, and eventually stacked in ricks six feet high secured by large stones, or placed against a stone wall. Apart from routine work, there is little to do until the hay harvest, generally in August or September, though sometimes a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with the hope of a second crop in the autumn. Oats and barley are harvested in September, after which the main potato digging takes place, though some are dug earlier for the household. From October to late February, there is little to do except tend the stock, though
some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under government
schemes. Few farmers make
the ricks of peat beside their houses so
commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch
it as required.

THE SEA

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major
aim of the Congested Districts Board,
and from the eighteen-nineties to the

the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live 311
among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—
and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry.
(Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the [231] ●
cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house
are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring 476
traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours
is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, 241
and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among
neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other
operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, [221]
seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties 571
of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them
as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical 621
nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to 361
confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement 361
in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partner-
ship farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well 311
attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. 311
It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, 423
for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the [777]
occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a
headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer
pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked
stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in
good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new
division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we 311
should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with
the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean,
even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived
from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are
subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat.
Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing
or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable.
Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis
is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable
land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed [231] ●
pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half
the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there
are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the
whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter.
And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many
years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's
neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at
that season, when food for livestock is scarce. 311

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep 221
were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken 241
from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen 237

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[1] Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 349.

[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.

[3] ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.

[4] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.

[5] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

342 beauty which vary subtly from one region to another in response to local climates, conditions and contacts. The use of local building materials meant that they fitted into landscapes of which they were literally a part, their clay or stone walls gathered from the earth on the spot, their timbers dug from the bogs, their thatch harvested from the fields. A Swedish ethnographer writes that 'the best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe.'[1] The result of an unbroken tradition was a fine simplicity of style and proportions, with nothing of the vulgar obtrusiveness of the new fashions in country houses, based too often on urban styles and red-brick respectability. Before the famine, houses in the market towns also were very largely of traditional local style save in the central square. Isaac Weld, describing Roscommon in 1832, states that out of its 517 houses no less than 462 were thatched.[2]

Our concern is with the old-style house as a shelter for man
342 and beast and as the vehicle of family lore and regional tradition.
362 In the crowded clachans limitations of space and the fact that
231 diarying was mainly practised in the summer booleys go far
to explain the absence of separate byres or dairies. Sanitation was of the crudest and closets unknown. It is these aspects of Irish rural life that have most readily aroused the amused indignation of the critics and the defensive wrath of Irish patriots. As we read in an earlier description of the Western Isle:[3]

At one of th' ends he kept his cows,
At th'other end he kept his spouse.

The custom of housing man and beast together has been very general among pastoral peoples in regions of difficult climate, whether in Highland Britain or the European mountain zone. Parts of Ireland, however, have long had a different type of house giving more family privacy: in the lowland parts of Leinster, East Munster and South Ulster the house with central chimney and fireside partition did not easily allow of the keeping of livestock in the house, and one is inclined to regard

[1] Åke Campbell, *Folk-Liv.* (1937), 228.
[2] Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 307.
[3] W(illiam) M(offatt), *A Description of the Western Isle*, Dublin (1724), Canto 2.

this style as an improvement introduced by English settlers. 342
This central-chimney house with its 'jamb-wall' hearth will be 362
described in the following chapter. In any event, although 231
stray hens, a pet lamb or a farrowing pig may occasionally join the cats and dogs in an Irish kitchen, the keeping of cattle in the house is a thing of the past. Yet it was so recently practised, especially along the Atlantic seaboard, that many existing houses are not far removed from kitchen-byres, a cross partition conveniently converting the byre into a bedroom, store or dairy.

Moreover the shape and internal arrangements of the prevailing pattern of traditional rural dwelling are conditioned by these antecedents. The long rectangular shape was sanctioned by custom and preserved by superstition; a house, to be 'lucky', must not be more than one room wide (Fig. 8). 'Widen the house', I have heard it said in Donegal, 'and the family will get smaller'. The hearth gable of the house was, where possible, dug into the slope of rising ground, so that it would have been difficult to enlarge the house by widening it: it could grow more easily in length. The long shape is also characteristic of humble dwellings in the small straggling Irish towns. Their streets are lined by whitewashed cabins strung end to end interminably; in the 'cabin suburbs' one rarely sees a house that is not aligned along the road. Describing Ballymoney in Co. Antrim about 1830 the Ordnance Survey Letters state that many houses facing the main street had no access to the byres and stables behind, so that cows and horses had to be taken in and out through the house. In parts of western Ireland cows were brought into single-roomed houses within living memory. In Clare Island, Co. Mayo, there were at the turn of the century only five or six houses out of the total of 120 into which the cattle and pigs were not taken at night.[1] Writing of the village of Kilgever near Westport in 1880 an observer states: 'It is a terrible thought that these huge heaps (of manure about the doorsteps) had all been taken from the single rooms, each of which formed a common stye for men, women, children, horses, cows, pigs and poultry.[2]' It is still characteristic of many small farms that the manure heap is not far from the

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[1] C. R. Browne, *Clare Island and Inishturk.*

[2] J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught in the Spring of 1880* (1888), 54

342 front door, for the cows are kept in a byre which is a continua-
tion of the dwelling house, an obvious convenience though there
362 is not, as in the longhouse of Wales and Dartmoor, direct
231 access from kitchen to feeding-walk.

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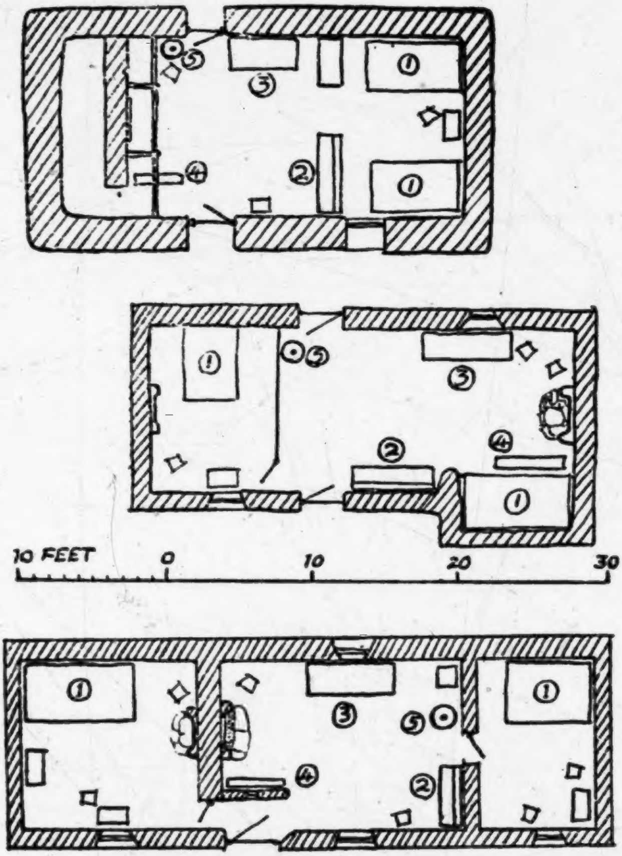

Fig. 8. House plans. *Above:* hipped-roof house, Co. Galway (compare Fig. 13, 2). *Centre:* house with outshot, Co. Donegal (compare Fig. 12, 3). *Below:* house with jamb-wall, Co. Down. (1) bed, (2) dresser, (3) table, (4) bench, (5) churn.

THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the 342
long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive 362
from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It 231
used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house
with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that
in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will
find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able
to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in [372]
the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house
farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end', a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was
obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the
byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against
a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, [361]
for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you
can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be [539]
recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord, and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense from the new tenants for improvements made.

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European 342
house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round-ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper

when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342 "twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the [763] fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [777] luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door, [764] and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354] room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the [231] flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, [777] in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

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[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet.*

[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands.*

[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

342 kitchen is generally floored with puddled clay which takes a surprisingly well-wearing surface. The housewife will tell you that such a floor raises less dust than one of concrete, and if it tends to wear unevenly this matters little since the cooking pots [415] and some of the furniture which is not built-in has three legs [352] instead of four and will therefore stand firmly on an uneven floor. The rocking chair, despite New England's claim to have invented it, was surely first devised for such a floor. Lime, cowdung or ashes were sometimes added to the floor when it was being prepared, and mud scraped off the road, already well puddled, was considered an excellent floor material.[1] In Armagh, we are told, floors were made by simply digging up the ground and trampling it: 'They sometimes have a dance for that purpose, and many a match comes out of a thing of the sort.'[2] Another method was to keep a flock of sheep moving about the newly spread floor for some hours until it was well puddled. The bottom byre-end of the old-style one-roomed farm house was cobbled, and a flagged walk led from door to door. Devices ● 231 for tying up the cows were secured to or built into the bottom 353 gable: a variety of stone and wooden fasteners may still be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island. One writer humorously observes of Co. Galway that the cow had to be tethered lest she should eat the bed-straw, but that pigs and poultry were free to roam.[3] The hens spent the night on a rope or pole hung across the kitchen from eave to eave, and laid their eggs in handsome nesting-baskets of woven straw (Fig. 16). Here we may notice a curious bit of folklore which suggests that hens were carefully looked after for superstitious reasons, as well as for their economic value and for the cockerels' time-keeping. It is said that every night the hens, when they argue among themselves before settling down, are plotting to leave Ireland and fly back to Norway, but in the end they decide to postpone the trip for another day! In Co. Limerick elaborate three-tier wooden hen-coops are sometimes seen in the kitchen, and in Co. Down I have found the sitting

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[1] J. Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland* (1837), 1, 112.

[2] Ibid., 186.

[3] T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Carna', in *The New Ireland Review* (April, 1898).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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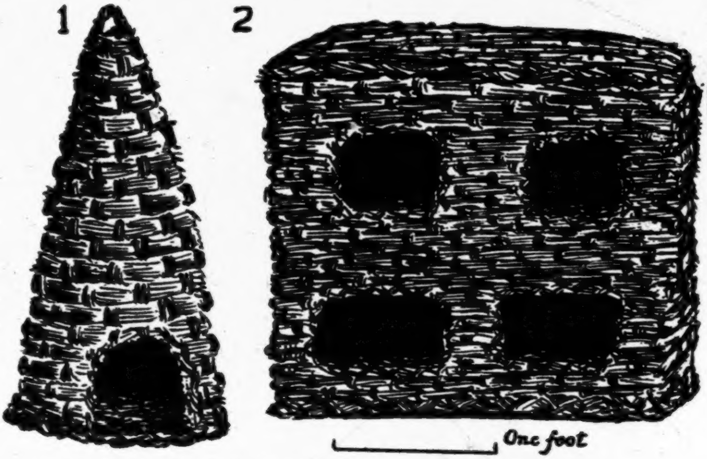

Fig. 16. Straw hens' nests. (1) Co. Clare. (2) Co. Leitrim.

hen warmly ensconced in a stone-box alongside the fire. In the mud floor one may sometimes see large 'pot-holes', hollows 353 in which the heavy iron pot is placed when the boiled potatoes [415] are pounded for pig-food (Fig. 19). The wooden or iron 'beetles' with which the pounding is done are as varied in shape and size as they are indispensable (Fig. 17). Sometimes

[413]

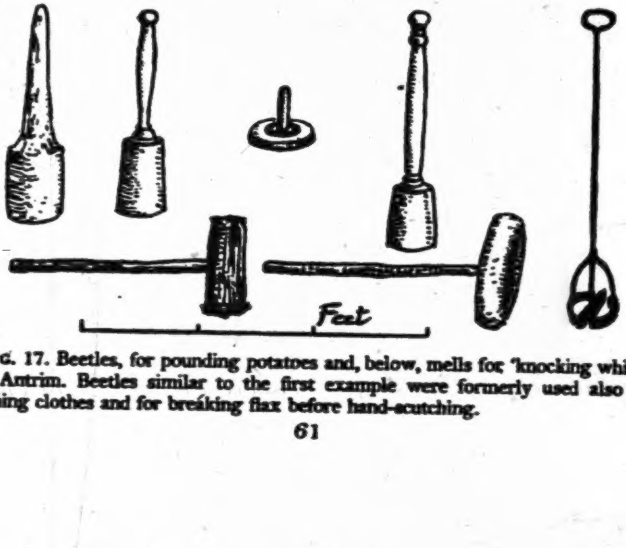

Fig. 17. Beetles, for pounding potatoes and, below, mells for 'knocking whins', Co. Antrim. Beetles similar to the first example were formerly used also for washing clothes and for breaking flax before hand-scutching.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

353 a wooden plank is set in the floor as a footing for the pot, or to give the spinning wheel a firm base. The upright churn also needs a firm footing and in the Mourne Mountains a movable granite flag was kept for this purpose. I have seen a mud floor in Co. Down with several round holes in which milk was poured [231] for each member of a family of cats. In the Bronze-Age Orkney village of Skara Brae every hut had stone-lined holes sunk in the floor, which were thought to have been used to store limpets.[1] In archaeological excavations near Belfast I have found holes which were presumably used for storing milk-products sunk in the clay floor of an 'earth-house' (souterrain) of the Dark Ages.[2] In some old houses there is a hole near the fire, either in front or let into the wall alongside, which is used to store the ashes.

In nearly every example of prehistoric and early historic 354 houses which have been excavated, the hearth occupies a central position, and cooking pots would have been suspended either from the roof timbers or from specially constructed supports. We know from English travellers that this continued into recent centuries. Thus Fynes Moryson: 'the chief men in their houses make fires in the midst of the room, the smoke whereof goeth out at a hole in the top thereof.'[3] He goes on to say that the humbler clay or wattled cabins also had their fires in the middle, and in the early nineteenth century we read of houses in West Antrim where the fire, though not in the centre of the room, was 'advanced some feet from the gable wall so that the persons of the family can readily sit round it.'[4] The description given by Charles Lever of the little cabin of Owen Joyce on one of the Brannocks Islands off the west coast, even if fictional, is worth quoting because Lever was probably drawing on tradition. It reads: 'It was built in a circular form, the chimney in the middle. Certain low partitions sub-divided the space into different chambers, making the centre the common apartment of the family, where they cooked, and ate, and chatted.'[5] In the course of time, however, the fire has come to canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354 shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373] were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made [492] partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

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[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 17.

[2] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 5–27.

[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 231.

[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 275.

[5] Charles Lever, *The Martins of Cro' Martin* (1864), 2, ch. 31

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342 is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft 353 is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231] ● to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513] the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352 the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

[text continues on p. 71]

POTS AND PANS

Despite certain conservative elements it must be recognized 262 that very great changes have taken place in the Irishman's diet 178 in recent centuries. Tea and the potato, invaders from east and west, have largely replaced whitemeats, although another more recent pair of intruders, maize-meal and rice, distributed by the British government during the famine, have made no such conquest. Dr. Salaman has fully discussed the depressing effects of the potato on diet and culture.[1] Unless one has seen a peasant family sitting down to a meal of boiled potatoes it is hardly possible to credit the consumption figures. It used to be reckoned that a stone a day was the allowance for a labourer, and it was 'by no means uncommon, in times of plenty, for a labourer to eat 14 lb. of potatoes at a meal'.[2] An average consumption of 8 lb. per day for each member of a family is well authenticated. It is not surprising that there was a general craving for 'kitchen', tasty relishes such as strong butter when this bulky, starchy and monotonous food came to dominate the Irish diet. There seems to have been an expansion of sea fishing to keep pace with the demand for 'kitchen'. Down to recent [458] times salt fish were hawked through the autumn countryside by noisy 'cadgers', and the careful housewife would have a barrel or two of salt herrings put by for the winter. One is reminded of the 'relishes' with which many African peoples relieve the monotony of a diet of mealies.

One of the many Irish customs which the English found 262 revolting was the bleeding of cattle. Fynes Moryson wrote: 231 'they often let their cows' blood, eating the congealed blood with butter'.[3] Arthur Young notes that in Wicklow 'they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food'.[4] In Ulster cattle were bled 'in a smooth place, the coagulating blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed. This was cut up into squares and 'laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year'.[5] Unfortunately few details of the bleeding operation have come down to us though I have been told that it was customary to close the wound with a cloven stick.

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[1] R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), chs. 11–18.

[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 429.

[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.

[4] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 62.

[5] C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 333.

262 In some parts of the country the blood was made into puddings.
Sheep's blood, in this case caught at the slaughtering, is used
231 for making blood puddings in parts of the south, and black
puddings made from pig's blood are popular in other parts of
the country. I believe one might divide Ireland into two regions
according to the popularity of black and white puddings, but I
would hesitate to demarcate the border!

264 A great deal of information could be collected on local and festive foods and on food substitutes which were resorted to in famine years. The traditional times and names of meals also offer a fruitful field of investigation and they should be listed before new fashions entirely replace them. In many parts of the country only two meals were taken, at morning and evening, a fact to be remembered when considering the colossal quantities of food that were consumed at a meal, but it should be added that there were times when little food of any kind was available to the poorer people.

Throughout the lowland farming country the commonest ditch is an earthen bank faced on one side with stones and planted with quicks slipped in near the base among the stones (Fig. 36). This was the 'approved mode' of enclosing the land 351 417

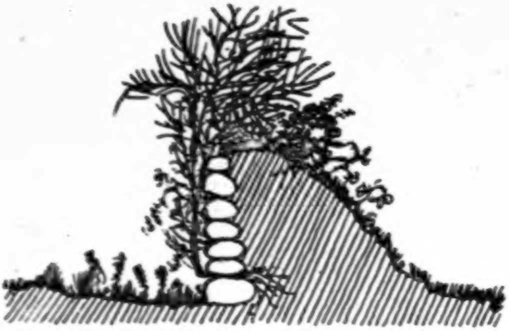

Fig. 36. The hedged ditch, cross-section.

advocated by the reformers from the late eighteenth century onwards, but it was noted that 'the planting of hedgerows was repugnant to the practice of the country' and in many districts the hedges were neglected and the livestock still had to be tethered in the fields.[1] The tradition of temporary fences died hard. 'A year's ditch passeth for a very strong fence', wrote Sir John Davies to the Earl of Salisbury in 1606. These sod fences were deliberately thrown down after harvest, and the decayed sods enriched the soil. The *Advertisements for Ireland* published in 1623 state: 'Their fields lie open and unclosed. Where wood is plentiful they hedge in all their corn with stakes and bushes and pull them down in the winter and burn them.'[2] When fixed field-divisions were adopted, the hedgeless earthen bank was preferred in many parts of the country, usually growing a luxuriant crop of brambles and gorse (whins). These were a [231] useful source of firewood and provided both shelter and food [246] for the livestock, the 'pounded whins' being fed to horses. The knocking stones, flat slabs or stone basins where the whins

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[1] *Report on the Estates of the Drapers' Company in Ireland*, 1829.

[2] *Advertisements for Ireland* (1623), Ed. G. O'Brien (1923), 33.

Co. Kerry, which is believed to date from the sixth or seventh 171
century. Whether or not the origin of this style of building in western Europe should be placed, as I am inclined to believe, in the megalithic period, there can be no doubt that it represents, in various parts of the Mediterranean-Atlantic route, the survival of an ancient method of building. It has had a long life in exposed hilly districts where suitable materials lay to hand, especially where the interests of simple shepherds and cattlemen were dominant. Villages of houses with domed or conical stone or mud-brick roofs are a feature of south-east Italy and Syria, and of the dry belt stretching eastwards to India.

Some of the Co. Kerry farmyard clochauns are still used for 343
storing milk; their thick walls are admirable for maintaining 291
even temperatures. Their association with the pig may also be an archaic feature, for the pig was perhaps the first domesticated animal to be brought to Ireland, and although much altered in breed, it still thrives best in warm, draught-proof surroundings recalling the sultry jungles of its original south-east Asiatic home. The well-worn phrase about 'the gentleman that pays the rent' not only summarizes the role of the pig in recent historic times but carries a humorous hint of the veneration in which the pig was once held in southern and western Europe. Here archaeologists have postulated an early Neolithic matriarchal 'swine-culture', vestiges of which would explain the fact that the pig was the only cult animal of the oldest of the Greek mysteries, the Eleusinian.[1] Later pork became the favourite food of both the Roman and Celtic worlds. In parts of Ireland the
pig is driven into the house for luck on May morning, and the [755]
pigsty figures in a strange ritual for certain cures, e.g., a sufferer from mumps should be led with an ass-halter three times round the sty! Further, there is surely a supernatural quality in an animal which is reputed to be able to see the wind! In many parts of the British Isles, especially in Scotland, it is unlucky to speak of a pig when fishing at sea. Superstitions about the pig are numerous in Scotland, and in the Highlands there was formerly a tabu against keeping pigs and eating pork. This was apparently true also of those parts of the north of Ireland which have had close connections with the Western Isles.

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[1] C. O. Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*, 37.

343 lightly meddled with, and if the water is not as good as usual
312 you will be told, in the phrase used for an ailing human being,
that the well is 'not *at* itself at all'.

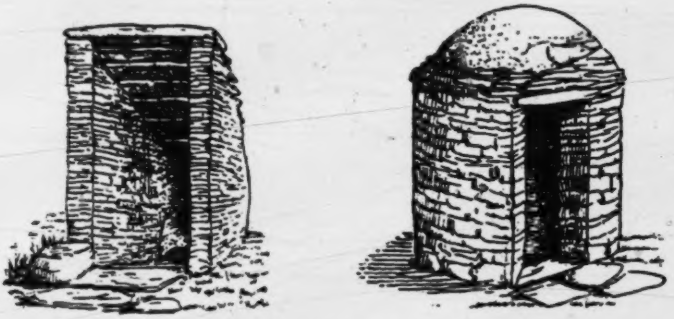

FIG. 40. Well-covers, Co. Cavan and Co. Down.

Finally we come to a miscellaneous assortment of outbuild-
343 ings and shelters built to house various animals and birds.
235 Elaborate pigeon houses (ducats) designed to house hundreds of birds seem to be confined to the east and south coasts and to areas planted by English or Scots. They are no doubt manorial in origin but some existing examples were built in the early nineteenth century, though they are no longer in use. In these areas the smaller farms may have little pigeon houses made for a dozen birds, and the humblest stable is likely to have a pigeon hole or two in the gable. The birds formerly nested in hanging nests of plaited straw.

Cavities in the thick walls about many old farms were built
343 as dog-kennels or duck-houses, and simple shelter holes ('boles'
231 in Ulster) were intended to house assorted three-legged iron pots (Fig. 32). An interesting variant is the bee-bole, a shelter for the bee-skep, a few examples of which have been observed in eastern Ireland.[1]

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[1] R. M. Duruz and E. E. Crane, *English Bee Boles* (1953). (National Beekeeping Museum Pamphlet No. 1.)

ploughs were known in parts of Celtic Ireland, but the light 407
plough or *ard* almost certainly prevailed, and it is unlikely that
ploughs of any kind were employed outside the 'few favoured 412
acres' of the infield. A light plough, at any rate, would be unfit
to break the tough sod of the outfield, which was allowed to
rest for long periods. Even today the answer I have been given
when I have asked ridgemakers in old outfield why they were
using spades has been: ''Tis too tough for the plough!'
Ploughing 'by the tail', similarly, becomes intelligible only if
one envisages it as restricted to infield cultivation. The iron
plough with curved mould board did not reach the outlying
corners of the country until late in the nineteenth century, and
down to the time of the famine iron ploughs were used only in
progressive areas where there were improving landlords. The
prototype of these ploughs was the Scottish two-horse swing [177]
plough invented by James Small about the year 1765. By the
end of the century it had reached Ireland (and also Norway)
and it was a powerful instrument in breaking down the archaic
system of openfield husbandry. The Irish were amazed when
they first saw a ploughman with a Scots plough both driving
the horses and holding the stilts.[1]

Under the traditional system ploughing was 'merely marking 407
the land with furrows'[2]: a spade or mattock was commonly
needed to turn back the earth, and to force the share into the 241
ground it was often necessary to have a man walking alongside [412]
the plough, pressing down on the beam with a stout stick. No
bits or reins were used, and the plough itself required two men
or a man and a boy, 'one to hold and one to drive', that is one
holding the plough stilts and the other leading the horses by
walking backwards before them. Evidently the man at the
handles needed to give all his attention to the plough. It was,
as a Cavan man described it to me, a process of 'jerking up 407
and down'. Many of these practices were probably taken over 241
from the days of ox-teams. Ploughing with oxen is believed to 231
have died out in late medieval times, though it was reintroduced
by some landowners in the late eighteenth century. The small
farmer did not use oxen for the plough because unlike horses

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[1] R. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 111.

[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 656.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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they could not be put to other purposes such as going to the fair.

[231] The wooden plough has now been almost entirely replaced by the iron plough, but in many districts a wooden plough, often converted from a lea plough, is preferred for opening drills (Fig. 42). The potato growers of the kingdom of Mourne in Co. Down, for example, find that it suits their stony soils and is less likely to be damaged by boulders. The rough wooden mould-boards carry the earth with them and distribute it more evenly than the iron drill-plough, which tends, moreover, to 'put a skin' on the soil and to pile up pointed ridges which would require to have their tops flattened later.

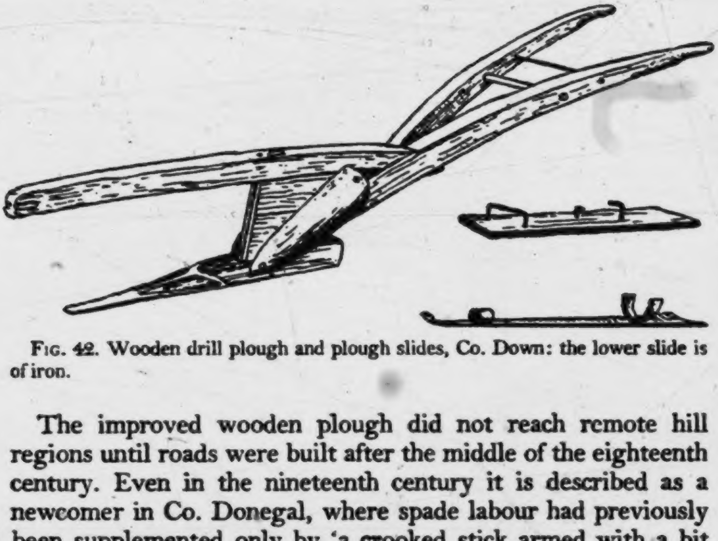

FIG. 42. Wooden drill plough and plough slides, Co. Down: the lower slide is of iron.

The improved wooden plough did not reach remote hill regions until roads were built after the middle of the eighteenth century. Even in the nineteenth century it is described as a newcomer in Co. Donegal, where spade labour had previously [412] been supplemented only by 'a crooked stick armed with a bit of iron, with a second stick grafted to it to give two handles'.[1] This archaic implement must have resembled the wooden 'ard' (araire) of Mediterranean lands. It was so light that when the improved wooden plough with mould-board was introduced into Donegal the ponies were not equal to the task of pulling it. In west Cork the new wooden ploughs were not to be

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[1] John Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience as an Irish Landlord*, 47.

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the [114] twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the [721] favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd [462] corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The [231] livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XV

HOME-MADE THINGS

UNTIL the agrarian and industrial revolutions broke up economic self-sufficiency nearly every material need on the small farms was satisfied by the work of the family and the local community. Houses, furniture, food, clothing, simple implements and tools were home made or home produced. The most important specialist was the maker of edged tools, the blacksmith who thus occupied a special position in the community. His forge, customarily placed at a cross roads near running water, was never locked and became a rallying centre for idle men on wet days and for dancing in the evenings. His strength and skill were proverbial and magic powers were attributed to him and to the forge water. The smith was the first person to be invited to social functions. Not being a food producer he was, like the seers and later the priests, entitled to tribute of corn and first fruits. When a beast was slain the head was the perquisite of the smith. The ancient laws prescribe in detail the allotment of the various parts of the carcase to different offices, and the smith's right was maintained down to recent times. George Petrie, the nineteenth century antiquarian, is reported to have said that he remembered the time when a smith might have 50 or 100 heads of cows and pigs pickled in his kitchen.[1] Other craftsmen were itinerant because they could not be supported by the work available in any one district, and the last

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[231] ●

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[1] See Stephen Gwynn, *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906), 219. The method of dividing a carcase is thus described about the year 1600: the head, tongue and feet to the smith, the neck to the butcher, two small ribs that go with the hindquarters to the tailor, the kidneys to the physician, the udder to the harper, the liver to the carpenter and sweetbread to her that is with child. *C.S.P.* (*I*) (1601–3), 684. Dr. Johnson refers to the custom in the account of his journey to the Western Isles: cf. Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 171.

HOME-MADE THINGS

By far the most versatile of home-produced rope-making 283
materials is straw. Rye straw is longer, softer and more flexible
than any other, but very little rye is now grown save along
the west coast where it is still the most popular thatching
material. Wheat straw is the best substitute, but in fact most
farmers must now depend on oat straw, thus 'tying up' some of
their fodder. Straw rope (súgán) not only had many direct
uses but served as the basis for such crafts as the making of
mats, baskets, bee-skeps, mattresses, hen roosts, pigeons' nests
and horse harness. It was used for seating chairs and making
arm-chairs, and for a great variety of hobbles and tethers for
animals and ties for holding down thatch. The fondness of the
Irish for tethering and hobbling their livestock must be seen [231]
in the light of inadequate fences and the conditions of partnership
farming in open fields. Not only the larger animals, but
hens, turkeys, and geese were commonly restrained in this
way. 'All livestock of the poorer man is in this sort of thraldom'
wrote Arthur Young.[1] One may still see a tethered hen with her
chickens that might have stepped out of the illuminated pages
of the fourteenth century Luttrell Psalter. A straw rope stretched
across the kitchen made a serviceable clothes-line. Torches were
sometimes made from twisted straw; on the other hand, when [373]
suitably coated with mud, straw ropes made a fireproof smoke-canopy.
Chopped straw or layers of straw ropes were also used
in constructing mud walls, and it is possible that, as in Sweden, [333]
stakes wrapped in straw rope daubed in clay were once an
alternative to 'wattle and daub' for wall building. It has been
stated that the fowlers of the Mayo coast would let themselves
down the cliffs on straw ropes,[2] which must have been exceptionally
well made; ropes made from the fibres of bog fir were more
reliable. In Co. Antrim fowling ropes were of horse hide, but
bent ropes are also recorded.[3] I have seen countrymen on a
windy fair day wearing an improvised belt over their long coats
in the form of a straw rope, and in the early nineteenth century
children in Co. Cork were described as 'clad in nothing except
a coarse woollen shirt that came half way down the thighs and

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[1] Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 37.

[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 55.

[3] R. Dobbs, *County Antrim in 1683*.

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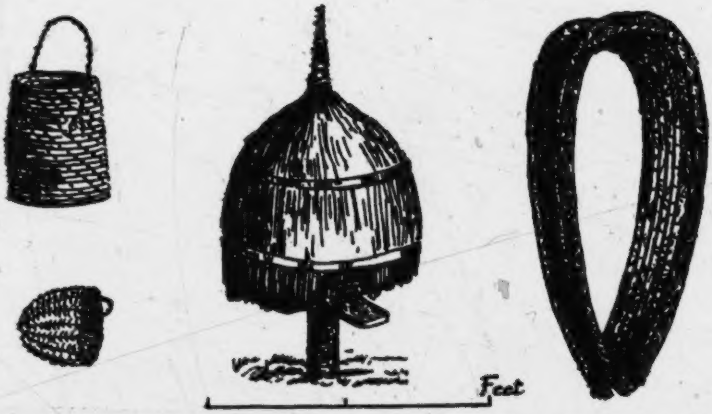

FIG. 69. Coiled food-basket, Aran Islands; calf muzzle, Co. Clare; beehive and horse-collar, Co. Antrim; all of straw except the calf muzzle.

some large rectangular examples seem to be made of built-up plait as described below. The distribution of coiled basketry in western Europe suggests that it is an extension northwards from south European and African regions where it is a richly developed art. A straw underthatch from Co. Down—the only one of its kind I have seen in the north—was made in a simple weaving technique, using straw ropes. But the commonest method of making mats was by what I have called built-up plaiting; beginning with a straw rope twisted on itself, wisps of straw are inserted in every third twist and their ends worked into plait in combination with the combined ends of the previous wisp. Fresh handfuls of straw are regularly inserted into the plaits. They are given different names in various parts of the country; for example, tates in Antrim, kets in Down, and gleogs in Meath.

Such mats can be made of any desired size, and in the past they served many purposes, as hangings to mark off bedrooms or bed alcoves, as linings for the wattled doors of houses, and as mattresses. Their long-continued use with wattled doors on houses of mud or stone carries the suggestion that wattled
[342] houses of the better class may once have been lined with straw mats serving as draught screens and taking the place of the

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XVI

WRACK AND WRECK

000 NO part of Ireland is more than sixty miles from the sea and its most populous districts have for ages been strung along the shore. This is as true today for Co. Donegal as it is for Co. Dublin. Yet we think of the seashore as the most natural part of our scenic heritage, the zone least affected by the hand of man which, inland, has wrought massive changes and turned forests into bogs and farmlands. True the great headlands must have presented to ancient man much the same majestic outlines as we admire today, but the lowlying stretches of coast, unstable in the face of erosion and deposition, have been considerably modified also by human interference. Deep in the ancient beach deposits and layer upon layer in the sandhills where we picnic and play lie the relics of ancient shore dwellers. It was here of necessity that man found his first foothold on the island, to it he has clung and to it inlanders have returned to satisfy a variety of needs. Here by the shore man has gathered cockles and mussels, dug for bait and reaped the harvests of wreck and wrack, here he has built weirs and traps for fish, slips and shelters for boats, racks for drying nets and kilns for burning seaweed. Here too he was wont to hold festival with rites and games in seasonal gatherings long before port cities blocked the estuaries and holiday crowds thronged the open beaches. Easter and Harvest were the old times of festival, when the moon was full and the tides ran low.

A teeming population of shellfish was the shore's first
222 attraction, a steady supply of food supplemented at the nesting
● 231 season by seabirds and their eggs and in summer by the anadromous fish seeking fresh water. In hard winters and late

springs when fodder was scarce cattle, sheep and horses found 222
edible seaweed on the shore. Scottish planters in Co. Down 231
found that their sheep 'kept fat and wholesome all winter and
spring by feeding on the oare.'[1] This is nowadays one of nature's
neglected resources partly, no doubt, owing to enclosure and the
loss of grazing rights. It has been claimed as the result of experiments
that the feeding value of *Ascophyllum nodosum* (knob
wrack), which grows towards high tide mark, is almost equal
to that of meadow hay. Certain species of seaweed are still, 222
however, gathered for human consumption—carrageen or Irish 262
moss (*Chondrus crispus*) sloke or laver (*Porphyra*), dulse
(*Rhodymenia*) and dulaman (probably chanelled weed)—
whether as medicine or 'kitchen', that is a tasty morsel to be
chewed between meals, or boiled to be eaten with potatoes.
In lean times the kitchen might become the staple, and a
writer in the 1830's stated that when the potatoes gave out
'hundreds of the people may be seen going to the seaside to
gather dulaman.'[2] Carrageen, besides being made into a jelly
possessing many virtues, was used as a thickener for milk.

The most profitable way of exploiting seaweed down to 222
recent times was for the burning of kelp, which became a considerable
business among shore-dwellers in the eighteenth
century as the growth of industry stimulated the production of
soap, bleaching materials and glass: more recently kelp was
chiefly in demand for the preparation of iodine. But there are
dimly remembered ways of utilizing seaweed ashes in the home
which would make kelp-burning a traditional occupation. In
the Western Isles of Scotland kelp-burning is said to have been
introduced from Ireland about 1735, but there too it must have
been an ancient custom, for Martin Martin tells us at the end
of the seventeenth century that seals, seafowl and fish were [251]
preserved in 'the ashes of burnt seaware'.[3] (Cheese, we learn,
was preserved in the same way, or 'lapped in tang'). Kelp was
made by burning the thick stems of tangle (*Laminaria*) or
other coarse weeds—to which, as well as to the ashes, the name
kelp is applied—which are thrown up in the winter storms or

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[1] W. Montgomery, *Description of Ardes Barony* (1683), 139.

[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 50.

[3] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 135, 159.

262 sold fresh in the markets of the Bann Valley, and were salted down for winter use in place of herrings.[1] They have gone the way of most of the pre-famine 'relishes' which came to be despised as the threat of famine faded after the middle of last century. The elvers, too, used to be taken out of the teeming rivers in spring with sieves and pressed into cakes or boiled in milk and made into a kind of eel-cheese. In the River Bann the 226 elvers are now trapped at the first weir, at the tidal limit, and transported upstream, up to 30 million a year being given an easy passage in this way. A marked reduction in the size of the silver eels netted on their return to the sea some ten years later has been interpreted as a result of this interference with nature. The bulk of the eels taken are sold live in the London markets. ● [231] In addition to elvers salmon fry also was in former times taken for food and fed to pigs, and by an Act of Elizabeth's reign swine were prohibited from feeding on the shores of tidal rivers 'where they destroy a great quantity of salmon and eel fry'.[2]

Many traditional methods of fishing survive on the lakes of the Irish midlands. The otter board, now more often seen along the coast where fishermen trawl for flat fish in sandy bays, was formerly widely used in lake fishing and is considered to be 'an implement of very ancient origin in Ireland'.[3] Related to it is the 'pooka', a board fitted with mast and sail which carried out the baited long lines.[4] Fishing lines were until recently 283 sometimes made of horsehair by an interesting and undoubtedly ancient method. The instruments employed are goose or swan quills, cut down to make open-ended tubes some three inches long, two or three being needed according to whether a two- or three-strand line is being prepared. From ten to twenty long hairs taken from a horse's tail are threaded through each quill and knotted together at one end, the other ends of the quills being plugged with short pieces of quill which grip the hairs yet allow them to slide through. The quills are now rolled one against the other in the fingers, and as the strands twist on one another they pull down the hairs which feed them. The

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[1] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 243.

[2] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 153.

[3] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*. See also R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 53 (1954).

[4] W. H. Maxwell, *Wild Sports of the West*, 77.

ences affecting human beings and the animals and crops were 527
usually potent. It is remembered that 'the oldest woman in the 372
town' would go round the fire three times on her knees, reciting
prayers. To walk three times sunwise round the fire was to
ensure a year without sickness, and as the flames died down the [751]
cattle were driven through the embers and their backs were
singed with a lighted hazel wand: the sticks were preserved [231]
and utilized for driving the cows. By tradition everyone carried
home a burning stick from the fire, and whoever was first to
take it into the house brought the good luck of the year with
him. A glowing turf from the fire was carried three times sunwise
round the dwelling house, and others were thrown into
the growing crops. Yarrow was hung in the house to ward off [824]
illness. Fernseed was gathered for its magic powers and divinations [751]
made from the roots of bracken and lilies. We have already
noticed the custom of retaining some of the ashes from the [787]
Midsummer fires to mix with the following season's seed corn.

The third fire-festival of the year is associated with St. Peter's Eve on 28th June, but I have not come across many traditions of St. Peter's bonfires except in Armagh and Wexford: it may thus be mainly restricted to areas where English influence was strong. More widespread and better known, because they have been caught up in many patterns and in such popular pilgrimages as that to Croagh Patrick, are the celebrations of Lammas, originally 1st August, now held on Lammas Sunday, the last in July, which is also known as Garland, Bilberry or Height Sunday. This marked the end of summer and the beginning of harvest: it was a first-fruits festival into which the alien potato has been fitted, and no potatoes were dug before this time. Offerings of flowers and
fruits were made at holy wells, and in some places cattle were
made to swim through streams and loughs into which lumps of [231]
fresh butter had been cast:[1] 'They think no beast will live the whole year through unless they be thus drenched'.[2] In hilly districts Height Sunday is observed by climbing to a recognized picnic place where bilberries are gathered and games and dancing were formerly enjoyed. In Co. Down a large prehistoric

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[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 1, 282.

[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young
children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231] •
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [286]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the house- [294]
hold. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [178]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [222]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often de- [482]
manded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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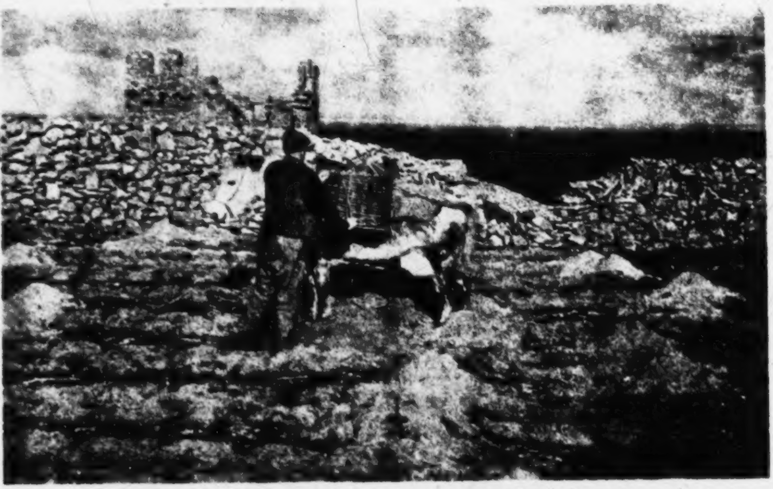

Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences,
fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in
quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between
larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[436] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings
when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden
comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a
full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce,
[433] under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the
agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[437] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of
the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer
before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an
old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas
containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to
be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage
is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and
sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown
in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or
farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet.
Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

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The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433
become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. [231] •
Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [226]
and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the
eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [311]
became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [654]
fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241]
expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231]
subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy
experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231
more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422]
2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654]
horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses
are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831]
inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding
of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232]
castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying
excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and
a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis
Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats
on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231
cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437
and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234]
low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between
Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and
bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast.
Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505]
struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled
to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern
transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the
water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435]
forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves
at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50
pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the mainland 221
and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233
throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234
south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous
plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered
by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462]
and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three
hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of
spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can
feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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234 fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures.
Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than
[462] the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and
cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely
than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above.
[512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four
thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the
summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and
holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right.
He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly
should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction
312 of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and
[233] outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment.
The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing
land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed
of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a
[343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually
thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small
windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used
for pasturage.

233 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and
236 slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to
graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in
the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five
or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and
July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight
[437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder
possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six
months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer.
[262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat
[437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling
lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat.
[232] These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were
low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they
[224] also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound,
when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now,
their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing
chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the
premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings.
They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection
and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached
to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A
man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and
a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the [541]
island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain
themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses,
in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference.

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag 226
fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that 174
time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and
one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained
from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services.
Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime [221]
of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January,
when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and [462]
children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming [857]
and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the
coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast
for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in [227]
length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted
to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen
would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their
lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight.

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only 226
has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a 177
major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the 178
year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between [437]
February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches,
and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the
island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary
in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and
sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required
over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in
shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend
long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several [829]
reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries
—knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements
of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing
gear and fishing techniques themselves.

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are
the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of
migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the [648]
1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and
in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to
the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that
I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already
wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife
and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several
reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease,
and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate
decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must
be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used
one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story
whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the
Saturday Evening Post, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar.
The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an
outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some
of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past
and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process
of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis
Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of
these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or
abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume.
Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress
traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest
women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing
is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as
to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be
designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless
there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that
cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but
[829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk
[628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of
628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the
184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which
• [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from
two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a
visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals.
[512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do
[823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect
628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally
184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from
177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to
178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and
[342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are
[464] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend
to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in
Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more
[275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the
pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier
and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village
is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter
[241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom
often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and
setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use
[421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

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796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November
11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with
[778] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main
[782] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous
[262] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter.
796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during
776 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few
798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil
and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is
796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be
776 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck
782 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes
● [231] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying
[828] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood
[237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all
crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated
by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to
825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to
417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following
53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where
they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
So little I am, my family is great.
Get up landlady and give us a break.

Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed
[184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with
776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three
will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld.
771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies;
775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag
or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected 17
by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended
from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of
Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century.
The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and [829]
servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they
lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign [648]
domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants [511]
of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of
island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the [114]
eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by
archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding [438]
area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that [628]
time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was
carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island. 433

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy [423]
of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow [244]
potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods [246]
and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The [231]
back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, [311]
and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" [423]
on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen
acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous
and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they [244]
are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, [262]
meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are [439]
imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally [249]
rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence [342]
activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, [28] [434]
weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making. [294]

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and 434
sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the 439
collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the 433
keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft
objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, 226
fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in 433
the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few 434
islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and
kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less [136]
plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter [132]
[178]

17; Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Many kinds of
behavior disassociated from sex in other societies *
such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in 831
Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of 832
this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only [291]
infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; [514]
children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their 291
faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my 515
wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a 834
man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once [854]
when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said
with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing [513]
always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the
bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea 481
in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. 834
Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that 526
nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and 761
weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is 777
best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean [501]
rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the
agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The 291
truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in 834
order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back
of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small [526]
pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity [231] •
of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually
aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for
licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors.
My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popu- 123
lar folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American 291
Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only 834
two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and,
needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular
song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had 291
they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of 834
nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it [165]
might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when
finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was [759]
assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and